

Mervis Chiware
Bernard Nkala
Innocent Chirisa *Editors*

Transformational Human Resources Management in Zimbabwe

Solutions for the Public Sector in the
21st Century

 Springer

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Chapter 1

The Human Capital Management in the Zimbabwe Public Sector: An Overview of Issues and Challenges



Mervis Chiware, Bernard Nkala, and Chirisa Innocent

Introduction

Public sector human capital development should be at the core of any development agenda. Public sector human capital entails the expertise, competencies, knowledge and skills of public servants and officials serving in the public offices. It is the number one asset of public service and therefore requires to be invested in for growth and even survival of the public sector. Workforce, therefore, becomes the critical asset for organizational development for both developed and developing nations. Human capital investment is greater in developed countries than developing nations. This explains the difference in economies as human capital is used for achieving competitive advantage. Good performing public services of countries like Britain have human capital departments that are highly conscious of the employees' needs and employees are treated as an important resource irrespective of their levels. Of importance to the human capital managers of developed countries is skills and knowledge identification for specific jobs and succession planning for senior managerial posts. To enable effective service provision for developed nations' public sector, there is constant engagement between public managers and government that results in favourable human capital policies. Human capital departments of developed countries are highly valued just like other departments. Human capital development in such countries can be attributed to good human capital policies that are supported by educational institutions which train and mentor employees. This approach is lacking in developing

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countries where the interplay between good human capital policies and supportive educational policies is yet to be realised.

Being the biggest continent, Africa is expected to be more developed however, it has not been able to harness its human capital, and this has contributed to lack of economic transformation. Human capital development is the cornerstone for Africa's development as the continent is endowed with natural resources (which are critical for development) but lacks the expertise in terms of human capital to translate unprocessed input into finished products and therefore ends up exporting its materials as raw to developed countries that have developed their human capital. The continent needs to develop human capital that competes in the knowledge sector with the developed nations. Africa requires a transformation in human capital development policies which can only be achieved by committed leadership who believe in mentorship. Such leaders require a grounding in recruitment (reasons and challenges) for them to be able to address matters on engagement and retention. Due to lack of effective human capital policies, Africa's human capital demands the availing of career planning tools that assist them in identifying their career moves. Lack of this has contributed to brain drain either locally to the private sector or internationally to developed countries where attractive policies are in place.

Africa's public sector evidences a poor work culture and lack of professionalism that results from centralised decision making as the middle and lower-level public human capital managers have delegated powers. Processing of personnel matters is not a matter of urgency as there are multiple offices involved that in most cases do not add value. This frustrates the human capital as it results in salary inconveniences and unnecessary delays in grievance handling. The end result is a poorly motivated human capital that does not deliver to expectations. The public sector in Africa lacks customized training for its human capital.

In Zimbabwe the public sector human capital drives the economy as more than half of the population access their services through the mechanism of public enterprises. Government is the major agent in economic and infrastructure development as well as the production of goods and services. Zimbabwe's public service is well known of an underperforming, lazy and poorly motivated human capital that does not respond to the needs of its clients. This is a cause of concern as the public sector human capital is central to the overall performance of the public sector. Often public sector managers and leaders lack advanced, relevant, and dynamic skills and knowledge to deal with Human resources challenges within the New Public Management environment. It becomes critical for public sector transformational human resource management to suit twenty-first century clients' needs. Transformation of the human capital is achieved through effective human capital management. Public sector human capital management is the vehicle through which public sector human capital can be managed. It is an approach to strategic civil service management as opposed to the traditional sole management of staff by the human resources department. It includes the management of both people and the organisational policies that contribute to the success of public sector organisations.

Therefore, this book is for public sector managers and those people directly or indirectly involved in human capital management. It provides in-depth knowledge

and guidance in the effective human capital management within the context of public sector environment. In the public sector human capital management is not only the prerogative of line managers (who are directly involved in human capital management) but even involves everyone who has a stake in determining the welfare and development of public employees. The book is therefore of relevance to human resource practitioners, national level policy makers especially the Treasury that through financing public sector activities or services, determines the success of public sector human capital development as good and effective human capital development policies require funding at the implementation stage.

Survey responses from Zimbabwe's public sector highlighted priority areas for human capital transformation to include but not limited to well-being for employees, human capital development, talent identification nurturing and mentoring, performance management and culture transformation, digitalisation of the human resources systems, transformational workforce training and the safety of employees. This book becomes a steppingstone in solving public sector human capital challenges as it equips human capital managers with solutions to public sector problems. Solving the highlighted priority areas will lead to economic growth and therefore the achievement of the Zimbabwe National Vision 2030.

Chapter 2

Role of the Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Human Capital Development in Zimbabwe



Chrispen Maireva  and Patience Mabika

Abstract The chapter seeks to examine the role of Zimbabwean higher education institutions (HEI) in human capital development (HCD). It explores the processes and nature of skills development and the linkages, or lack of linkages, between HEI and industry for development in Zimbabwe. Data was gathered through a qualitative approach. Archival methods were also used where policy documents were selected purposively to collect data. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. The findings revealed that there is a fragmented skills development policy for the country. In addition, it was revealed that there is limited engagement between Ministry and the corporate world in curriculum development to ensure relevant skills are produced for industry development. It is concluded that a coordinated skills development process, skills policy and frequent engagement with industry will help in skills development. It was recommended that there should be a training policy for the nation that governs skills development by all institutions under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Furthermore, the ministry should increase its engagement with the industry to ensure relevant skills are produced. The working conditions of trainers should also be improved to meet the international standards to retain and motivate experienced and qualified trainers.

Keywords Higher education institutions · Human capital · Human capital development · Skills policy · Training · Curriculum · Skills

Introduction and Background

Human capital plays a significant, and sometimes critical, role in national economic development around the world (Baah-Boateng, 2013; Webb et al., 2018). This is considering the move to what is called knowledge-based economies (OECD, 2016, 2007) whereby tertiary level human capital is seen to be a crucial feature of economic growth in most of the developed countries. There is a large body of literature, that has

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revealed that one of the most important factors of economic growth is human capital (Abel et al., 2019; De la Fuente & Domenéch, 2006) with regards to both the level effect by its decisive influence on production through labour productivity (Teichler, 2009) and the rate effect by contributing to increased competitive advantage through innovation and technology diffusion (Horwitz, 2005; Siggel, 2001).

Literature is also replete with evidence that investment in human capital development is one of the most effective ways of promoting a country's continued economic growth and social equity (Eseyin et al., 2014). The celebrated management gurus Porter (1998) and Drucker (1999) contend that human capital not only influences economic growth but also increases national competitiveness. Moreover, the growth of human capital positively affects the other kinds of capital (financial, intellectual, physical, and social) (Lange & Topel, 2006).

The pivotal role of higher education institutions (HEI) in fostering economic development in developing countries is widely acknowledged in literature (OECD, 2016; World Bank, 2018) especially through generating and developing human capital. Traditionally, HEI's main purpose is intended and crafted to equip graduates with skills and knowledge to enhance their creativity and innovation to meet the labour demands of various industry sectors. However, today's ever-changing, technology-driven global economic landscape requires graduates with more affability, ingenuity and vitality that are not solely focused on traditional skills (Jisun & Soo, 2016; Van der Heijden, 2002). HEI has increasingly been called upon in recent decades to prepare students for the world of work, and universities are pressured to develop graduates' employability.

It is generally accepted that education and training, offered at the tertiary level, is a great leap towards achieving robust human capital development for an economy that seeks competitive advantage in this globalised world (OECD, 2016; World Bank, 2018). Higher education is therefore now seen as playing an increasingly crucial role in a country's economic well-being and development because only higher-level education and skills are perceived as being sufficient to allow countries to compete in the globalised knowledge sectors (Abel et al., 2019). Given the importance of both human capital development (HCD) and HEI, the analysis of the interface between these two concepts has progressively taken on a more central role in discussions regarding national and regional economic development, growth, and success.

Zimbabwe has a vibrant higher and tertiary education system that has produced many exceptionally talented individuals whose contributions have been immensely valued locally, regionally, and internationally. Realising the importance of quality human capital skills to national development, Zimbabwe has focussed, and committed substantial resources, towards HCD since 1980, to develop a sustainable local workforce, facilitating rewarding careers and graduate employability for young graduates, and boosting its competitiveness in the region and even internationally (Abel et al., 2019). However, the 2018 National Skills Audit for Zimbabwe

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found that Zimbabwe has a big deficit of critical skills with an overall critical skills shortage of 61.75% (GoZ, 2018; World Bank, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, HEIs are defined by legislation as a technical or polytechnic college offering degrees; a public or private university or university college and its associate or affiliate institutions or an arm of a foreign institution of higher education that awards degrees (Garwe & Thondlana, 2019; Zimbabwe Higher Education (ZIMCHE) Act, 2006). There are currently 24 registered HEI in Zimbabwe. Of these, 14 are public universities while 10 are privately owned. Additionally, there are several polytechnics and teachers' colleges and a network of over 100 public and private colleges that offer degree programmes, albeit in association with registered universities. According to, the Zimbabwean education system is perhaps one of the best in Africa with its graduates being found to be very competitive on the global labour market.

The higher education system in Zimbabwe has several statutory bodies and other voluntary bodies that are mandated to superintend over it (Garwe & Thondlana, 2019). These include the National Manpower Council (NAMACO) that is mandated by legislation to provide the parent ministry with policy advice on HCD in both the private and public sector where it identifies, advises, recommends, and monitors the training needs in the industry. Thus, the HCD policies in the country are informed by advice and recommendations to the parent ministry from NAMACO.

The quality assurance process of all the HEI in Zimbabwe is done by the ZIMCHE (ZIMCHE Act, 2006). The ZIMCHE is solely responsible for monitoring and evaluation of HEIs through registration, accreditation, and academic audits; harmonisation of quality assurance procedures and systems; promotion of quality standards; and advisory services. Given this level of quality assurance, the qualifications that are awarded at HEI in Zimbabwe have a level of quality that is sufficient for the human capital and HCD needs of the country in relation to the NAMACO recommendations to the government.

Given the importance of human capital investment in determining developing countries' futures, exploring the concept of the role of HEIs in HCD is a significant topic of research. The performance of the government strongly depends on the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes of the workforce involved in the implementation of the work processes. For this reason, an investigation into policies that increases the potential of the human capital in the public sector, and the role of HEI in enabling and enhancing those skills, knowledge and personal attributes is very important. This chapter, therefore, reviews the role of HEI in HCD for improved efficiency and service delivery in the public sector, and empirical evidence in Zimbabwean HEIs. The chapter also explores the processes and nature of skills development and the linkages, or lack of linkages, between HEI and industry development in Zimbabwe.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Human Capital Development

While the term human capital is relatively new in human resources management literature, the basic philosophy that underpins its underlying tenets dates to the seminal works of William Petty, the seventeenth-century economist. Petty argued that it was pertinent to account for the inclusion of what he termed the ‘value of workers’ in wealth for actuarial purposes (Nafukho et al., 2004; Nerdrum & Erikson, 2001). Adam Smith (1776) argued that education and learning need to be considered as investments in human beings (Zula & Chermack, 2007). In the twentieth century, Fisher (1904) proposed the capital theory in which he postulated that all forms of stocks should be conceptualised as capital in the production of goods and services. It is these works that formed the basis of the early human capital theory that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. The concept of human capital, and the human capital theory has evolved considerably from the works of three main authors who have particularly influenced this development namely Schultz (1961), Becker (1963), and Mincer (1970).

While Schultz (1961) studied human capital from a macroeconomic approach that mainly focussed on seeking to clarify the investment process and the incentives to invest in human capital, Becker (1963) and Mincer (1970) took a microeconomic view that focused on the effect of human capital on the level and distribution of earnings. Schultz (1961) defined human capital as the skills and knowledge of people who contribute to the growth and development of national and global economic systems. Schultz argued that to improve the welfare of the poor, knowledge was the source of their worth rather than the then existing proposition that it depended on land, technology, or the poor’s efforts.

Schultz (1961: 2) further posited that “By investing in themselves, people can enlarge the range of choice available to them. It is one of the ways free men can enhance their welfare”. According to Schultz (1961), the meaning of investment had to be expanded to take into consideration all activities that enhanced an individual employee’s knowledge, skills, and productivity. These included expenditure on formal education (from primary education right through to tertiary education); on-the-job training (OJT) and apprenticeships; adult education and non-formal education and health. These ideas were further developed and refined by Becker (1963) who postulated that human capital accumulation directly takes place through three main types of training or knowledge investment namely formal schooling, OJT and apprenticeships, and other knowledge.

Formal schooling is... “an institution specialising in the production of training, as distinct from a firm that offers training in conjunction with the production of goods” (Becker, 1993: 51). OJT is defined as “learning new skills and perfecting old ones while on the job” (Becker, 1993: 31). OJT can be further classified into two: general training that refers to training for generic skills that are useful across industries and organisations; and specific training that relates to training that is tailor-made to

the specific needs of the current organisation. Such type of training will be of no use in other organisations. Other knowledge refers to any other information that an individual acquires to increase mastery of their economic situation.

Becker (1963) justified the effectiveness of investments in human capital from an economic viewpoint. His views were further expounded by Mincer (1970). Together, they conceptualised human capital as a stand-alone category of capital, comparable to financial and physical capital in respect of economic and productive characteristics (Zula & Chermack, 2007). Becker (1963) started by defining human capital, that to him means everyone's stock of knowledge, skills, and motivations. He further argued that investment in human capital can be quantified in terms of the cost of education, the accumulation of professional work expertise and experience, information retrieval, geographical mobility, and health protection. Thus, he asserts that "... these investments improve qualification, knowledge or health and therefore promotes an increase in monetary or natural income" (Becker, 1993: 39). In his view, he theorised human capital as the skills and knowledge manifested as the ability to accomplish a task to create economic value (Unger et al., 2011). Thus, the knowledge and skills are human capital outcomes that are derived from investments in formal and non-formal education, and work experience and practical learning, that contribute to productivity and success (Becker, 1963; Unger et al., 2011).

The contemporary human capital theory proposes that there is a need for organisations to invest in developing employees' skills and knowledge through education (formal and non-formal) and training for increased efficiency and productivity (Lepak & Snell, 2002; Nerdrum & Erikson, 2001). Furthermore, the theory asserts that employees are the owners of their human capital and hence they take the conscious decision to invest in further education and training and product knowledge to improve their stock of human capital. They do this in the hope that they can increase their capacity to attain higher wages and greater productivity (Zula & Chermack, 2007).

Adedeji and Campbell (2013) observes that human capital refers to those sets of skills that an employee acquires on the job through training and experience. Additionally, it is the collection of all the new ideas and knowledge that an employee acquires while working that increase their on-the-job effectiveness and efficiency (Škare, 2011). It becomes imperative for an employee to continuously develop new and innovative ways of doing work in the work environment. It is these employees that have the requisite expertise, skills, and know-how to work in an organisation and contribute to its growth and development that are then collectively known as the human capital, more commonly referred to as the human resource (Blair, 2012).

Role of HEI in Human Capital Development in Developing Countries

In discussing human capital, education plays a key role in ensuring that the labour force is well-equipped to adjust to imminent changes. From basic education to life-long learning, setting up systems to develop the skills of the labour force is a priority for governments (Adedeji & Campbell, 2013; Unger et al., 2011). Two major educational and training areas are often emphasised when discussing the future of skills. These are science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and technical vocational education and training (TVET). Semako (2019) contends that HEIs have three major roles in HCD namely, developing the intellectual capacity of individuals so that they appreciate and understand both the local and international environment; contributing to national development through training of high-level future manpower, and ensuring that individuals are equipped with both intellectual and physical skills that enable them to be useful and self-reliant members of the society.

HEIs play a significant role in the manpower development of developing countries (Mamuli, 2020). HEI plays a role in skills development through well-structured entrepreneurial and educational programmes. In another study in Nigeria, Semako (2019) found that the HEIs also have a statutory role of giving learners the requisite knowledge that enables them to significantly contribute to the nation's economic growth and development. He added that they also must develop patriotic citizens who are focused on economic development. That is, the product should be physically, morally, intellectually, psychologically sound, that can be productively used by organisations and society as well (Semako, 2019).

Howell et al. (2020) hint that HEI plays a role in the reduction of poverty and development of sustainable livelihoods in the society through the research and innovation skills that are imparted in learners they can start up their businesses. This reduces unemployment and the crime rate in society as learners no longer wait to be employed but are now creating employment for others as well. In another study in Kenya, Mamuli (2020) found that to fulfil its roles or this mandate, HEI should ensure effective staff development programmes, effective teaching and learning and inculcate research culture in their institutions. There is also a need for generating and sharing knowledge and maintaining minimum educational standards.

In addition, Fitzsimons (2015) observes that education and training are key to the effective participation of organisations and nations in today's globalised economy. Therefore, the role of HEI to produce valuable human capital is crucial to reinforce the productivity among graduates by equipping them with sufficient knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other characteristics (KSAO) for employability. Moreover, the effort in developing human capital in HEI is a key thrust in generating a services-intensive economy (knowledge economy). Given that the public service rests upon providing services, HEI, therefore, needs to produce employees who have the KSAO to meet the needs of the citizen of a country and for the competitiveness of the country in the global village (Winterton & Cafferkey, 2019). HEIs involve the active participation

of people in the development process and the resultant need to construct institutions that permit, and encourage, that participation.

As countries move to knowledge-based economies, there is a need to educate young people to a higher standard through a high level of KSAO in the employees thereby creating a labour force that has the potential to drive the economic development of the country. As Porter (1998) argued, the quality of knowledge and skills generated within HEI and imparted to graduates, and the availability of such knowledge and skills in a country is a critical source of national competitiveness.

HEIs are expected to produce graduates with education and training programmes that encourage innovation, flexibility, and creativity. This allows for the continued renewal of economic and social structure in the face of a technology-driven, knowledge-based, and globalised world (Howell et al., 2020). HEI need to teach graduates (and future employees) more than just what is currently known, they also must keep abreast with advances in technology and the knowledge base, through training programmes aimed at refreshing their skills in tandem with changes in the economic and technological environment. According to the World Bank (2018), HEI increases the quantity and quality of research outputs through scientific and technological research and by training skilled workers thereby creating new knowledge. This allows developing countries to absorb, create, and disseminate new knowledge more rapidly and efficiently.

HEIs are not the only players in the knowledge production process. Independent research institutes and private companies are key players in national research systems with which tertiary education needs to build links. New collaborative settings, often in a “context of application”, are requiring new forms of engagement of researchers in higher education (Gachie, 2019). In a study in South Africa, Gachie (2019) found that there was a significant level of cooperation between HEIs, private industry and government through the triple-helix model in the dissemination of new knowledge and innovation.

The role of HEI in HCD has also been linked with globalisation residual effect, positive externalities/effect, creativity, and innovativeness. In a study in Malaysia, Suleman (2018) argued that in the face of the transition to knowledge-based economies, HEI can help especially developing and emerging economies to catch up or keep up with more technologically advanced, developed societies. Similarly, Gachie and Govender (2015) found that technology and innovation transfer is a key role that HEIs play in private sector HCD in their study in South Africa.

Adedeji and Campbell (2013) further argue that graduates from HEI are more likely to be aware of new technologies and are better positioned to make use of these technologies and create new stools and adapt and acquire new skills. This knowledge allows for the graduates (and potential employees) to improve their existing skill sets. New knowledge and skills create greater confidence and know-how in the graduates that they obtain from tertiary level education are also likely to engage in entrepreneurship, that in turn positively impacts job creation.

HEI also play a significant role in HCD as graduates can utilise their acquired knowledge and skills to assist their non-graduate co-employees to enhance and upgrade their skills and understanding of the work to be done (Gachie, 2019;

Gachie & Govender, 2015). The World Development Report (2000) argued that higher education is essential to develop countries if they are to prosper in a world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. The quality of knowledge generated within HEIs and its availability to the wider economy, the report stressed, are becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness. Another report generated further momentum for higher education by stressing the role of tertiary schooling in building technical and professional capacity and bolstering primary and secondary education.

HEI also has indirect benefits for the economy. For example, tertiary education produces well-trained teachers, that in turn improves the quality of elementary, junior, and secondary education (Mamuli, 2020). This increases the opportunity of secondary school graduates for economic advancement. As another example, training doctors, nurses, and other health workers improves a country's health, that in turn raises employee productivity in the workplace. In addition, by imparting leadership and governance skills, HEIs can provide a country with the capable and talented individuals that are needed in the public service to create national policies that create a conducive environment for the economic development of the country (Semako, 2019).

Furthermore, HEI can produce graduates that have knowledge and skills to set up fair, just and robust legal and political institutions and make these a part of the nation's socio-economic-legal fabric. Moreover, developing a culture of business and job creation require advanced decision-making skills and knowledge. Additionally, improving national security against internal and external threats and maintaining peace and order and addressing environmental issues also require premium skills that advanced tertiary level education is in the best place to deliver. Given that all these important services are required in the public sector of an economy, HEI is called upon to impart the requisite skills and knowledge and hence helping the development of human capital in a country (Bontis & Serenko, 2007; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005).

Methodology

The qualitative research approach was employed in this study to collect the data given the need to critically evaluate the role of HEI on human capital development. The qualitative approach was underpinned by a case study research design and the focus was on Zimbabwe Higher and Tertiary learning institutions. The study employed the archival research methods that included a broad range of activities applied to facilitate the investigation of policy documents, national reports and textual materials produced by and about the Zimbabwe Higher Tertiary learning institutions. Policy documents were limited to those on the role of HEI in human capital development covering diverse skills.

The study followed the purposive sampling where the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) at the

national level was used. The focus was specifically on the departments that manage Higher tertiary education programmes in the country. Permission was sought to access national-level data on the role of Higher tertiary learning institutions of which was granted. The study also purposively selected one state university based on a conventional approach to reviewing the roles and impact of skills development programmes as required by the industry. The views and the perceptions of the industry depended on the documentary evidence collected from Ministry reports.

Archival data are that data is gathered and stored before the commencement of the research, intended for later use (Das et al., 2018). Archival materials provide unobtrusive measures of the process for the study of contemporary organisations and invaluable means of access in historical investigations. The examination of archival materials is thus important because they are ubiquitous, consequential, and strategically useful. Welch (2000) argues that archival data still has a place in contemporary, theory-generating research, given that it has a threefold role, namely that: it can be used to add empirical depth to a study as it is possible to generate new data and also it enables the researcher to verify existing data from other sources; archival data is suitable to generate evolutionary developments in a phenomenon by giving explanations of the process of change and evolution; and lastly, it can also be used to challenge existing theories and build new theoretical models.

The primary advantages of archival data are ease of availability and low cost. Payne et al. (2011) stated that archival methods are normally used because they are high-quality data sets and hence present the chance to "... test new ideas on existing data, often with large samples, while saving time and other resources" (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). Data collected were then analysed using thematic content analysis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

This section presents the results and a discussion of the findings of the study that explored the processes and nature of skills development and the linkages, or lack of linkages, between HEIs and industry development in Zimbabwe. It was found that, despite the political and macro-economic crisis that the country is faced with, its human-capital indicators (HCI) exceed the average for its region and income group. The World Bank (2020) confirms that Zimbabwe has a strong performance on the education dimension of the HCI in comparison to its regional, income-level and developing country of peers. It was also found that Zimbabwe has a well-educated workforce by regional standards. The results are presented in the following themes: the role of HEI in HCD in the Zimbabwean context; policy on skills development; integration in skills development; and HEI—industry collaboration.

Role of Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Developing Countries

The study found that HEIs in Zimbabwe are mandated to provide the necessary skills for the development of the country. The ministerial position is that the HEI should emphasise the development of graduate employability skills in the graduates so that they can fit in the workplace and be integrated into the labour force. This finding agrees with Semako (2019) who found that the three main roles of HEIs in HCD in Nigeria were to develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to appreciate and understand their local and international environment; contribute to national development through training of high-level future manpower and ensure that individuals are equipped with both intellectual and physical skills that enable them to be useful and self-reliant members of the society. In addition, the HEIs also have a statutory role of giving learners the requisite knowledge that enables them to significantly contribute to the nation's economic growth and development.

It was found that the HEIs were tasked to develop the intellectual capacity of the graduates to be able to understand their environment, contribute to the development of the country and be also self-reliant and job-creators. This is emphasised in the Education 5.0 framework that emphasises innovation and industrialisation and the production of graduates who have skills for the future in the face of advances in disruptive technologies. Education 5.0 also emphasise that HEIs should produce graduates who are entrepreneurial and able to create jobs for the development of the country. The other role of HEI in HCD was found to be the need to teach graduates more than just what is currently known, they also must keep abreast with advances in technology and the knowledge base, through training programmes aimed at refreshing their skills in tandem with changes in the economic and technological environment. The findings of the study confirm findings by Ogunu (2000), in another study in Nigeria, where it was found that HEIs play an important role in skills development through well-structured entrepreneurial and educational programmes.

One very important role of HEI in Zimbabwe is to produce graduates that are highly educated, such as scientists and technicians. Evidence suggests that educated graduates are quick to understand and adapt to new ideas and innovations in the production processes (Adedeji & Campbell, 2013). Thus, HEI enables employees to fulfil their potential by enlarging capabilities and this implies employee empowerment, that enables them to actively participate in their development (Tsaurai, 2020).

Another role of HEI that came out of the study was that HEIs must produce valuable human capital that is critical to reinforce the productivity among graduates by equipping them with sufficient KSAO for graduate employability. As countries move to knowledge-based economies, there is a need to educate young people to a higher standard through a high level of KSAO in the employees thereby creating a labour force that has the potential to drive the economic development of the country. Therefore, the HEI sector must produce skills that are sufficient for the technology-driven, knowledge economy. Moreover, the effort in developing human capital in HEI

is a key thrust in generating a services-intensive economy (knowledge economy). The findings agree with Fitzsimons (2015) who observes that education and training are key to the effective participation of organisations and nations in today's globalised economy.

The study also found that HEIs are expected to produce graduates with education and training programmes that encourage innovation, flexibility, and creativity. In the Zimbabwean context, the ministry is encouraging innovation and industrialisation and has mandated universities to create innovation hubs and industrial parks. This agrees with the World Bank (2020) that found that almost all state universities in Zimbabwe had created innovation hubs and industrial parks. HEIs are not the only players in the knowledge production process. According to the World Bank (2018), HEI increases the quantity and quality of research outputs through scientific and technological research and by training skilled workers thereby creating new knowledge. This allows developing countries to absorb, create, and disseminate new knowledge more rapidly and efficiently. Independent research institutes and private companies are key players in national research systems with which tertiary education needs to build links. New collaborative settings, often in a "context of application", are requiring new forms of engagement of researchers in higher education (Gachie, 2019).

The other role of HEI in HCD in the developing country perspective was found to do with the globalisation residual effect, positive externalities, creativity, and innovativeness. This is an important, key role for HEIs in globalisation so that developing countries can keep abreast with the technological innovations and developments in the advanced economies and the transition to the knowledge economy. The findings of the study were in tandem with Suleman (2018) who argued that in the face of the transition to knowledge-based economies, HEI can help especially developing and emerging economies to catch up or keep up with more technologically advanced, developed societies. Similarly, Gachie and Govender (2015) found that technology and innovation transfer is a key role that HEIs play in private sector HCD in their study in South Africa. Adedeji and Campbell (2013) further argue that graduates from HEI are more likely to be aware of new technologies and are better positioned to make use of these technologies and create new tools and adapt and acquire new skills for increased production and productivity.

When graduates from HEIs enter the workplace, they can utilise their acquired knowledge and skills to assist their non-graduate co-employees to enhance and upgrade their skills and understanding of the work to be done as was found by Gachie (2019). The World Bank (2020) argued that higher education is essential to develop countries if they are to prosper in a world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. The quality of knowledge generated within HEIs and its availability to the wider economy, are becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness. Another World Bank (2002) report generated further momentum for higher education by stressing the role of tertiary schooling in building technical and professional capacity and bolstering primary and secondary education.

However, it also found that HEIs are faced with several challenges in trying to deliver on their mandate of developing a country's human capital. Most of the challenges rested on inadequate funding. Given limited funding and significant financing challenges in the face of increasing demands from HEIs, Lundvall (2007) argues that many HEIs in Africa and most of the developing countries are under increasing pressure to demonstrate their social and economic relevance. HEIs are poorly funded such that they cannot properly train learners especially in those programmes that are practically oriented. This poor funding also affects infrastructure development and, in some cases, also lead to understaffing and high labour turnover.

Furthermore, HEIs are also faced with challenges of rapid economic, technological, political, and social changes (Semako, 2019). As alluded by Zeleza and Olukoshin (2010), these environmental factors are reshaping everything about tertiary education. Therefore, HEIs need to keep abreast with the ever-changing technological landscape and impart the most relevant skills for the future to graduates. Hence, the innovation and technology transfer to industry requires constant collaboration between HEIs and industry so that graduates are equipped with the necessary and up-to-date skills. HEIs should be innovative to keep pace with these changes otherwise they will end up producing irrelevant skills for this globalised era.

These challenges hurt society and the industry since the product that these HEIs produces is half-baked thus affecting economic development, productivity in organisations and firm growth (Semako, 2019). An increasingly important challenge faced by countries is to improve the ability of HEIs to transfer knowledge and technology, so the full social and economic benefits are realised. In summary, Stumpf (2010) alludes that the HEIs are characterised by low graduation rates, high dropout rates, low (and in most cases insufficient) funding, limited capacity for innovation and knowledge transfer, limited research capacity in the face of rapidly changing technological landscape, poor links to the labour market and the needs of the labour market that has negative consequences in transitioning into the knowledge economy.

Policy on Skills Development

The study established that there is no common skills development policy in Zimbabwe. The existing skills development process is fragmented with several government departments being responsible for skills development. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) formulates and implements skills training and development policies and promotes science, technology, and innovation for the country. It oversees, regulates, and registers all public and private universities, polytechnics, and teacher training colleges and other statutory bodies and agencies such as the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF), the Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO), university councils for state universities, and the ZIMCHE.

These organisations are tasked with supporting the development of specific aspects of higher and tertiary education, scientific research, and technological development

resulting in a fragmented policy framework for the higher and tertiary education sector. For example, each university is established in terms of its enabling act that outlines its mandate and niche. Thus, each university has a particular focus on the HCD and skills needs of the country.

Given the fragmented policy framework, the MHTESTD recently came up with a key strategic document entitled Education 5.0 (World Bank, 2020). The purpose of the Education 5.0 policy document was to establish a sound framework for elaborating a comprehensive vision for the tertiary education sector. Thus, the government is moving towards establishing a harmonised and synthesised policy framework for skills development in the country.

HEI—Industry Collaboration

The study found that there is a collaboration between the MHTESTD with industry and the HEI through the platform of the National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO). NAMACO is a private body set up by an Act of Parliament to advise the MHTESTD on matters pertaining to education and training policy at a national level, that is, occupational standards, accreditation, examinations, funding, curriculum quality and relevance, qualification frameworks, and access and management of the training processes.

NAMACO's purpose is to ensure that the local skills base is strengthened, that will contribute to the increase in productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness of the economy. In a study in South Africa, Gachie (2019) found that there was a significant level of cooperation between HEIs, private industry and government through the triple-helix model (THM) in the dissemination of new knowledge and innovation for economic development.

The THM explains the interaction among universities, industry, and the government in promoting innovation and technology transfer that is important for countries that want to transform from being resource-based to knowledge-based. Thus, the THM can be applied as a basic approach to promoting the HCD in Zimbabwe. The model views HEIs as centres for the provision of entrepreneurial education and producing graduates to address the needs of the business.

Integration in Skills Development

This study established that there is limited engagement between the MHTESTD and the corporate world in curriculum development to ensure relevant skills are produced for industry development. In this regard, the ZIMCHE that is mandated to promote and coordinate the provision of tertiary education and regulate standards for teaching, examinations, academic qualifications, and research in tertiary education institutions, has been tasked to oversee the implementation of the National Skills Qualifications

Framework (NSQF), that establishes accreditation and evaluation criteria for tertiary education programmes, and standardisation of the skills set for the same level of qualification. They achieve this through the establishment of the Minimum Bodies of Knowledge (MBKs), and the creation of innovation hubs and industrial parks that ideally strengthen ties between universities and the private sector while serving as incubators for innovations created by students, faculty, and researchers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded that a coordinated skills development process, skills policy and frequent engagement with industry will help in skills development. It was recommended that there should be a training policy for the nation that governs skills development by all institutions under the MHTESTD. Furthermore, the ministry should increase its engagement with the industry to ensure relevant skills are produced. The working conditions of HEI staff should also be improved to meet the international standards to retain and motivate experienced and qualified trainers.

Given that the stocks human capital reside in the employee through an employees' attitudes, education, genetic inheritance, knowledge, and skills, it can be argued that to create value, there is a need to have the human capabilities and capacities to develop new ways of working and new models of management. Thus, higher education and training is important in human capital development.

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Chapter 3

Enhancing the Quality of Practical Skills Assessment in Zimbabwean Higher Tertiary Education Institutions



Chrispen Maireva  and Patience Mabika

Abstract This chapter identifies the strategies employed to enhance the quality of practical skills assessment by Zimbabwean higher education institutions (HEI). Quality practical skills can be drivers for the accomplishing of excellence in organisations. Hence, it is necessary to explore how practical skills can be enhanced. Methodologically, the systematic literature review methodology was employed to review 33 published empirical studies in peer-reviewed journals on enhancing the quality of practical skills assessment in a developing country perspective from the year 2005 to 2019. The findings contribute to the research scene by providing significant insight in terms of current trends and the focus of existing research in enhancing quality practical skills assessment. Findings revealed were that item writing, field assignments, case studies, and theoretical assignments, practical and theoretical examinations were appropriate strategies for enhancing practical skills assessment HEI. The findings further revealed that the quality of practical skills assessment can be enhanced through adequate resources, staff professional development, and the use of technology in teaching/learning to improve the competencies, knowledge, and skills of the graduates. It was recommended that there is a need for the development of a holistic model of quality practical skills assessment for improving the acquisition of practical skills by the students.

Keywords Assessment · Practical skills · Psychomotor domain · Strategies

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Introduction and Background

This chapter seeks to establish how the practical skills assessment can be enhanced in higher and tertiary education (HTE) institutions to produce graduates with relevant and transferable skills given the advances in technology. It is common cause that experts, governments, thinktanks, and policymakers across the world recognise that there is a need for standardised assessments that must be applied with the intention to measure the practical skills set of learners, jobseekers, and employees (WEF, 2018; World Bank, 2018, 2019; Zhao & Zhou, 2019). HTE institutions, particularly those dedicated to the development of practical vocational and technical skills, the world over is mandated to provide youths and adults alike with relevant practical skills for employability and career path development (United Nations (UN), 2015).

Practical skills education and training promotes human capital, cultivates sustainable and inclusive economic development and full and productive employment (Laukia, 2013). Expanding access to quality tertiary, technical and vocational education and training institutions can help reduce income inequality and promote social mobility through greater access to skills, training, and jobs (Lange et al., 2020). These practical vocational and technical skills are the cornerstones of an employee's profile and human capital capability. Considering the technological advances, the changing nature of jobs, and the move to knowledge-based economies around the globe, practical skills education, and training, therefore, need to develop and master transferable (both cognitive and non-cognitive) and digital skills for tomorrow's jobs (World Bank, 2019). In addition to theory, acquiring practical skills is important as it ensures student learning and employability. The thrust of HTE is one of playing a critical role in producing graduates who are 'work ready, with an emphasis on developing practical skills'.

Traditionally, practical skills needed for employability and handcraft skill are learned through apprenticeship, school-based vocational education, or different kinds of on-the-job (OJT) training, work-related learning (WRL) and work-integrated learning (WIL) learning systems (Lange et al., 2020). In this regard, skills assessment becomes a pertinent issue on the HTE agenda. However, Bakhshi et al. (2017) assert that developing valid skills assessment methodologies appears to be a challenging enterprise, both intellectually and politically.

Assessment '...is at the heart of the student experience' (Brown & Knight, 1994: 12). The issue of assessment and quality assurance of practical skills embedded in the teaching and learning in HTE institutions, represents an ever-sought emblem that most in the developing countries seek to acquire to ensure fitness for purpose of the programmes of study (Wafudu & Yusri, 2020), the skills acquired, and their relevance to the knowledge economy in the face of advances in technology and production processes (Bakhshi et al., 2017; World Bank, 2019). It is widely recognised that assessment is an important influence on student learning, affecting engagement and motivation, effort, and performance. the practical element of a module possesses the capacity to represent a powerful learning environment whereby learners can

engage with peer learning, assessment, feedback, practical skill development and self-reflection.

Prades and Espinar (2010) contend that assessment has the potential to develop independent and self-directed learners, encourage and build self-confidence in the learners while also influencing how they view the learning process. Fry et al. (2009) argue that it is the responsibility of the educator to set suitable assessment tasks that support learning and assist learners to meet the set learning outcomes for the practical skills. McDowell et al. (2011) postulate that assessment methods for practical skills are classified as summative or formative. In addition, the terms ‘assessment for learning’, ‘assessment of learning’ and ‘assessment as learning’ are now gathering momentum in the assessment literature. In practical skills assessment, Abrahams et al. (2013) argue that for assessment to be effective, it is imperative to know that is being assessed—whether it be conceptual understanding, procedural understanding, process skills or practical skills.

The term ‘practical skills’ is rarely explicitly defined in the literature on practical work (Bennett & Kennedy, 2001). Abrahams and Reiss (2015) are of the opinion that, while practical skills encompass an individual’s aptitudes, competencies, and skills in the manual dexterity to manipulate a particular piece of apparatus/equipment, it is apparent that there are so many of those skills that it is practically impossible to assess a learner’s competencies in all of them. Practical skills learning is meant to put learnt theoretical concepts into practice so that learners can develop skills that are needed for doing a particular job or task. Practical skills learning allows learners to attain a ‘hands-on experience of equipment other tools of the trade that enables a learner to develop skills, understandings, and personal attributes’ (Verran, 2009). Moreover, practical skills also encourage creativity and employability skills (Knight & Yorke, 2006). Hence, it is imperative that HTE institutions and educators consider the learning environment that they create in practical skills to facilitate the engagement of deep learning approaches and introduce opportunities for the development of metacognitive and other life-long skills in learners.

Practical skills assessment is an important systematic process that is designed to provide confidence in services provided by HTE institutions to ensure that the public has faith and trust in the graduates and/or satisfactory standards are met of the graduates (Beerkens, 2018). However, traditional practical skills designs/formats with the associated assessment strategies often prevail, remaining present in curricula, starving learners of opportunities to develop employable, technical, and life-long metacognitive skills. Assessment and recognition of qualifications continue to take increasing significance in the knowledge-based economy. Thus, qualification examination becomes a vital tool in the assessment of practical skills. Practical tasks for examination need to be developed based on the occupational standards and descriptions of workplace functions and related workplace competencies considering the linkages to the national qualification frameworks (NQF), labour market and level of technological advancement of the country. For this review, the conceptual definition of practical skills assessment cuts across education level (degree, diploma, or certificate from either university, polytechnic, or teachers’ college), mode of delivery,

setting and type of learning arrangement. In this review, LICs were defined according to the World Bank classification of economies (in effect 1 July 2020 until 30 June 2021).

Given the foregoing, assessment of practical skills needs to have the appropriate models/designs that take into consideration the advances in technology and the country's labour market. The chapter identifies the strategies employed to enhance the quality of practical skills assessment to improve learners' acquisition of practical skills in HTE in the Zimbabwean and LIC context.

Methodology

The study followed the qualitative research design. A case study was used to conduct an in-depth analysis of enhancement of practical skills assessment within Higher Tertiary institutions. A purposive approach was followed targeting the Higher Tertiary institutions that could be conveniently accessed. In this case, all Higher learning institutions in here were used in the analysis. A systematic review of the literature was employed in this study throughout the research, selection and coding of studies that were analysed. In carrying out this systematic review, the Campbell Collaboration guidelines and procedures on systematic reviews methods were followed (Tripney et al., 2012).

Eligibility Criteria

Studies that were eligible for the systematic review were those that were conducted in low-income countries (LICs); reported between 2005 and 2019; evaluated on practical skills assessment in HTE to enhance the employability of graduates. In conducting a literature review, a diverse and comprehensive literature search was recognised as an important strategy to locate all qualifying published studies (Paioannou et al., 2009; Schucan Bird & Tripney, 2011). Several databases were electronically searched, that include Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, Econlit, ERIC, MDPI, SSRN, and ResearchGate and the other specialist databases, professional associations, foundations, library catalogues, government agencies, research centres and other relevant organisations. The literature searches in the databases combined the word searches practical skills, assessment, graduate employability, emerging markets (or LIC), and study design. This left 22 studies that met the eligibility criteria outlined above.

Data Extraction, Critical Appraisal and Analysis

The data were extracted independently and specifically from all included studies by the authors for this review. Critical appraisal was conducted to answer three specific questions, namely, is the study valid, what were the results, and were the results relevant locally? (Hombrados & Waddington, 2012). In terms of data analysis, the data that were obtained from the systematic review were analysed using thematic content analysis.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework

This chapter utilised the Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) model of skills acquisition. According to Vanpatten and Benati (2010), the ACT model, that was developed by John Anderson, is the most well-known model of skill-based theories. Anderson (1982) proposed a framework for skill acquisition including three major phases in the development of practical skills. These phases are declarative knowledge, knowledge compilation and procedural knowledge phases. Declarative knowledge is defined as knowledge about things and facts (Anderson, 1985). The declarative knowledge phase of skills acquisition involves all the requisite memory and reasoning processes that allow the learner to reach an understanding of the requirements of a specific task. At this point, the task content in most cases consists of the specification of task objectives (that is, the result of task completion or proficiency). It often includes specific task instructions that can be achieved through a lecture on general principles of equipment operation or a mechanical system. In this phase, the learner observes task demonstrations, encode and store task rules, and may derive strategies for the task. An important characteristic of this phase is the substantial demands on the attentional resources of the learner since they must devote most, if not all, of their attention to understanding and performing the task. In this phase, performance is error-prone and slow. Once the learner has come to an adequate cognitive representation of the task, they then proceed to the knowledge compilation phase.

In the second phase of skill acquisition that Anderson (1985) termed knowledge compilation, persons integrate the sequences of cognitive and motor processes required to perform the task. For tasks that allow for constant information-processing, accuracy (proficiency) and performance speed markedly improve throughout practice since various methods for simplifying and streamlining the task are tried and tested. Thus, the task performance generally becomes more accurate and faster than in the declarative knowledge phase. According to Anderson (1985), the process of knowledge compilation analogically parallels the process of compiling interpretive computer source code (the actual program statements) to obtain object code (or machine-level code). As this compilation occurs for each task component, the

declarative knowledge system, and thus the attentional apparatus, is relieved of the processes originally required to perform the task. As such, the attentional load on the learner is reduced as the task objectives and procedures are moved from short-term, or working memory, to long-term memory.

The third and final phase in skills acquisition is the procedural knowledge phase. Anderson (1985: 199) defined procedural knowledge as “knowledge about how to perform various cognitive activities”. This phase is reached when the individual has essentially automatised the skill. At this point, the task can be efficiently performed with little attention. During this phase, the skill has been proceduralist such that once a stimulus is presented, the response is prepared and executed without conscious mediation by the learner. After a substantial amount of constant and consistent task practice, skilled performance becomes fast, accurate, and the task can often be performed with minimal impairment while attention is also being devoted to a secondary task.

In this framework, Vanpatten and Benati (2010) argue that the development of the requisite skills set involves the use of declarative knowledge followed by knowledge acquisition and capped by procedural knowledge, with the latter’s automatisation. Therefore, skills acquisition is conceived to be a progression through three stages, declarative, procedural, and autonomous. These three stages resemble the three stages of cognitive, associative, and autonomous stage that Fitts (1964, as cited in Taatgen, 2002) posits for skill acquisition. Taatgen (2002: 97) has linked Anderson and Fitts stages by saying “In the cognitive stage knowledge is declarative and needs to be interpreted. Interpreting knowledge is slow and may lead to errors if the relevant knowledge cannot be retrieved at the right time. Procedural knowledge on the other hand is compiled and therefore fast and free of errors and can be associated with the autonomous stage. The associate stage is an in-between stage, during that part of the knowledge is declarative and another part compiled”.

Practical Skills Assessment

The concept ‘assessment’ was defined by Rawashdeh (2017) viewed assessment as a process that involves passing judgment on how adequate are marks or scores obtained through measurement. He further commented that assessment enables teachers to provide proper guidance to students, determine students’ understanding of what they are being taught and provide feedback to them on how well they are going academically. Assessment of student achievement is an important part of the teaching and learning process (Abrahams & Reiss, 2015).

Assessment plays a major role in understanding how students learn, their motivation to learn, and how teachers teach. It offers information to students about the knowledge, skills, and other attributes they can expect to possess after completing coursework and academic programmes (Kulhavy et al., 1985). However, setting up a good assessment instrument is a challenging task especially in the face of practical skills

acquisition. In the opinion of the researchers, students who receive ineffective instruction become weak in practical skills due to the wrong approach to teaching, supervising, and assessment of students. This affects their overall performance in organisations. Lecturers are the ones who give instructions and communicate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to students.

Assessment is the conduit through that knowledge and practical skills could be transmitted as such they should use appropriate teaching and supervisory strategies together with learning resources. The use of pedagogy will enhance students' acquisition of practical skills through activity-based instruction where students are given opportunities to be more active in the class. The teacher is expected to plan his lesson properly by carefully choosing the objectives of the lesson, devising on making the learners participate in the learning process more responsibly, selecting the appropriate strategies of teaching, appropriate strategies for supervision and determining the appropriate strategies for assessment. Inadequate supervision of practical activities also impedes the acquisition of practical skills especially where practical projects are inspected at the end of the process whereas adequate supervision on the whole practical process has a major influence on the overall performance and efficiency of skills acquisition.

Johnstone and Al-Shuaili (2001: 42) ask three fundamental questions that any educator needs to address when designing the format of practical skills assessment:

1. What are the purposes of teaching in laboratories/practicals?
2. What strategies are available for teaching in laboratories/practicals and how are they related to the purposes?
3. How might we assess the outcomes of laboratory/practical instruction?

On the other hand, Pickford and Brown (2006: 75) present the following four questions that need to be asked when designing an appropriate strategy for practical skill assessment in a practical task:

1. Which practical skills are to be assessed in each practical?
2. Can any of these be assessed synoptically (i.e., integrated assessment)?
3. How is each practical skill best assessed?
4. Who among those available is best placed to assess the practical skill?

Thus, assessment can also include collecting qualitative information—for example, when you ask a student to describe to you what information from a text, he or she found difficult and why. Both kinds of information, quantitative and qualitative, can be useful assessment information. Which to use and why depend on the purpose of your assessment and what you plan to do with the information. Typical classroom assessment purposes include providing feedback to students for their studying, making instructional decisions (what to emphasise in the next lessons and in what manner), assigning grades, and advising students about additional coursework.

The authors admit that, while the questions appear 'obvious at first sight, they do present the point that often these questions receive little attention, and in science settings, the practical report continues to dominate as the assessment method. Hence, these questions need to be considered when designing learning outcomes, learning

activities and their associated assessment strategies. The concept of an OSCE like, performance assessment is certainly one element worth introducing into the science laboratory environment, an approach that has been received positively in one study (Hunt et al., 2012). This has the potential to focus learners on the value and importance of developing practical, technical and competency skills.

Practical skills must also include active, interpretive, and iterative processes (Tobin, 1990). To achieve this in practical skills assessment is to employ the inquiry-based assessment methodology. The term inquiry-based has a very broad meaning. However, Weaver and et al. (2008: 577) state the main aim of this concept is centred on ‘engaging students in the discovery process at some level’ It was found that selecting the appropriate learning strategies, the expository style leads to learners to be familiar with achieving successful results constantly. As such, it leads learners to lack the ability to design practical approaches, troubleshoot or problem solve, while also rarely experiencing opportunities for metacognitive skill development (Caspers & Roberts-Kirchhoff, 2003). According to Garcia (2004), the inquiry style must be involved in some way or another capacity. It was found that in a study by Saribas and Bayram (2009), that used the guided inquiry-based assessment approach to create metacognitive awareness of the experimental format and design. The approach allowed learners to identify the problem, generate a hypothesis, design appropriate investigation approaches, and explain the basis for their selection—employing a participating and active, versus passive and observing, a role for students (Sato, 2013). Henkel et al. (2015) implemented a real-life practical scenario that targeted solving ‘real-life’ problems. Their study allowed students to oversee their experiment, gain hands-on experience with equipment they would go on to use in employment after college and develop critical thinking skills. Each of the studies echoes the fact that practical skills assessment needs to move away from the traditional, structured, memorisation themed instruction base to an experience learning base (Weaver et al., 2008).

A study by Bennett and Kennedy (2001: 108) reported on ‘the inadequacies in the current model of assessment of practical skills and abilities, with written examinations questions on practical work examining only a very limited range of abilities.’ As such, there was a need to show a clear and useful distinction that can be made between what has come to be known as the direct assessment of practical skills (DAPS) and the indirect assessment of practical skills (IAPS) (Abrahams et al., 2013). DAPS is that type of assessment in which learners are required to demonstrate specific or generic skills to determine their level of proficiency in the skill through physically manipulating real objects, for example, when a student is assessed on their skill in using a trowel in bricklaying (as opposed to either describing orally or in writing how they would envisage using the trowel). On the other hand, IAPS relates to assessment in which a learner’s proficiency level in respect of specific or generic skills, is indirectly inferred from the information they provide, for example, practical work reports.

Assessment can also include collecting qualitative information. Both kinds of information, quantitative and qualitative, can be useful in assessment. Which type of information to use and why depend on the purpose of the assessment and what

the assessor plan to do with the information. Typical classroom assessment purposes include providing feedback to learners for their studying, making instructional decisions (what to emphasise in the next lessons and in what manner), assigning grades, and advising students about additional coursework.

The summative assessment gives assessment information that is useful for making final decisions: for example, assigning end-of-term grades. Hence, while practical skills curriculum designers must ensure that 'high stakes' summative assessments should not be the only assessment format considered in practical skills, assessment must become embraced as a powerful learning tool that can assist learning through encouraging and empowering learners. Several studies (Aurora, 2010; Bree et al., 2014; Hunt et al., 2012; Pickford & Brown, 2006; Whitworth & Wright, 2015) have shown that summative assessment remains the main mode of assessment and hence overused.

Summative assessment causes lack of learner to focus, in that it was found to measure knowledge as opposed to the practical skills, it relies on learners' ability to record results, sharing of previous reports with future classes leading to plagiarism—while all the time leading to a high workload for both student and staff. From a vocational HTE point of view, practical skills centre on learners gaining hands-on, practical, technical skills that directly relate to practice. A key dimension of HTE in vocational and technical skills is via the enabling of practical skill development (Carlisle et al., 1999). A key component of the practical skills education programmes is periods of workplace placements, and on-the-job training as part of the course. During this workplace placement, the learner maintains and completes a workbook with specific practical skills signed off as completed once they are acquired and performed proficiently.

Formative assessment gives assessment information that is useful for continued student learning, positive classroom change, and other improvements (Bennett, 2011). Formative assessment is sometimes referred to as assessment for learning practices. According to Sadler (1998, cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006: 199) outlined how formative assessments are 'specifically intended to generate feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning. Thus, formative assessments, when applied together with feedback, plays the important role of learner empowerment, building learner self-confidence, motivation and developing self-regulated learners (Barnett, 2011). Therefore, it is important that assessment interventions need to challenge and motivate learners, stimulate learning, and provide feedback (Price et al., 2011). Given the vital role of assessment in practical skills, one would feel that assessment practices would be mastered at this stage, the assessment of student learning can be the Achilles' heel of quality (Knight, 2002) and therefore remains in need of significant attention in each element of the education environment particularly in practical skills assessment given that the practical skills are important to employability.

Feedback is a critical component for student learning (Carless, 2015). However, for feedback to assist the learner in the practical skills acquisition and feed-forward, it must be effective. To this end, the educators need to ensure that the feedback is unambiguous, clear, legible, timely, and supportive with information on how to improve

the submitted piece of work. Educators also need to create channels of dialogue on feedback with their learners to determine the purpose of the feedback. Clear communication between the educators and learners is important to avoid dissatisfaction in the feedback process (Bloxham & Campbell, 2010; Nicol, 2010; Price et al., 2011; Winstone & Nash, 2016).

Results and Discussion

The study sought to find out the strategies that can be employed to enhance practical skills assessment in HEI. This section presents the results of the study and a discussion of the findings. The data obtained from the study are presented here in two main themes namely strategies of enhancing practical skills assessment, HEI—industry collaboration, availability of resources, professional development of staff and use of technology-enhanced pedagogy.

Strategies of Enhancing Practical Skills Assessment

The study found that in the Zimbabwe context, the practical skills assessment strategies utilised at HEIs included item writing, field assignments, case studies, theoretical assignments, and practical and theoretical examinations were appropriate strategies for enhancing practical skills assessment HEI and through HEI—Industry collaboration. Item writing was found to include multiple-choice questions (MCQs), exercises (structured questions) and essays (unstructured questions) to assess learners' understanding of the practical skills that learners have learnt. Given that theoretical assessments of practical skills are necessary to measure the level of understanding in the theoretical foundations of the practical skill, they are an important tool that must be used to enhance practical skills assessment. However, there is a general perception that MCQs are considered the least challenging, easy, and list engaging. Therefore, assessors were found to use exercises and essays as means of giving learners more challenging and more engaging tasks to assess their acquisition of practical skills. As the literature in assessment methods (for example, Bourner et al., 2001) has pointed out, MCQ, essays and other exercises are important components of any assessment of practical skills. Thus, these assessment tasks are purely theoretical, they assist graduates to use the theoretical knowledge to solve practical problems.

The assessment of practical skills, learner's knowledge, and attitudes were found to be often assessed using the triple domain environment assessment approach, that is effective, cognitive, and psychomotor. A benefit of the triple domain assessment approach is its relevance and 'true to life' nature (Rushforth, 2007). Given the learners' awareness of the assessment approach, it can also potentially drive learning (May & Head, 2010). However, May and Head (2010) found limitations in this approach to assessment in the practical skills as concerns have been raised

around a selection of certain techniques for examination. This was found to result in the fragmentation and compartmentalisation of the practical skills. Moreover, Davis et al. (2006) question whether the ability to perform a skill in an examination environment can be translatable to proficiency and competency in performing the same task in a real-life situation. Therefore, to minimise the impact of these limitations on practical skills assessment, it was found that there is a need to vary the practical task that is assessed in the examination session. In this regard, it is incumbent upon the item writers to ensure that they include the whole spectrum of skills that need to be assessed.

Another strategy that was found to be employed in practical skills statements in the developing world was self-and peer assessment. Self-assessment is when learners assess their work. Peer assessment is when learners assess their colleague's work. These two strategies are recognised as 'assessment as learning' that support learning (Earl, 2003; Poon et al., 2009). Self-assessment was found to be fundamental to all aspects of learning in practical skills assessment in a study that was conducted by McDonald and Boud (2003). They further suggested that the 'formal development of self-assessment skills is an important part of the curriculum at all levels.' (McDonald & Boud, 2003: 210). Self-assessment, that can allow the learners to reflect on their learning, is recognised as a life-long skill that can help them set their own goals. Ensuring learners can independently assess their work and make judgements on it about meeting the criteria/standards, in ways that are suitable to their future careers and professions has previously been described as invaluable.

Peer assessment was found to be another assessment strategy that can enhance practical skills assessment in HEI in a developing country context. The study findings confirm those of Brown et al. (1996) who found that peer-assessment helped learners to be aware of the layout/structure and the coherence of the work. However, the same study, also reports that learners 'felt uncomfortable about another peer assessing their work' leading to feeling 'pressured and awkward when writing my assignment' in addition to the 'undesirable task of picking another student's work to pieces, and the thought of bringing their marks down'. The authors conclude that the discomfort exhibited by some learners about peer assessment, such as criticising their peers' work, some peers being overly critical and sensitivities around exposing their work, all seem addressable by further training and practice.

Overall, self-and peer-assessment share common attributes, for example, both involve learners assessing and judging the quality of submitted work (Poon et al., 2009). Regarding lifelong skill development, their importance cannot be understated. However, if one is going to consider them in the practical arena and keep them reliable, it is important that to train learners in the use of these techniques through practice (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001). Additionally, for learners to take self- or peer-assessment seriously, a pre-defined assessment system criteria or criterion-referenced marking scheme is necessary together with a discussion at each stage of implementation to help understand the assessment process, leading to the development of assessment literacies (Poon et al., 2009).

The focus of many HTE institutions is to produce 'work-ready graduates. It was found that for this to be achieved, the development of a significant suite of relevant

practical skills is essential (Hunt et al., 2012). In practical skills assessment methods, the focus centres on learners demonstrating proficiency specific or generic skills that are being assessed on the process, practical delivery and communication of knowledge or understanding. As such, the 'hands-on' skills being taught and assessed are each directly related to the practical work to be performed. However, in practical skills assessment, the main means of assessment has been practical reports (Bree et al., 2014; Hunt et al., 2012). It was also found that one of the strategies of practical skills assessment is the use of portfolios. Portfolios are growing in popularity as an assessment tool across disciplines. Incorporating portfolios allows the assessment of some other aspects of skills acquisition that are difficult to assess by other means. These skills include personal attitudes, attributes, professionalism, and reflection (Davis & Ponnampuruma, 2006). Portfolios stress the collation of work including a personal commentary and reflective narration (Baume, 2001), that are elements that are not incorporated in practical reports. Therefore, it is essential to consider systemic changes to both the format and assessment strategy of practical sessions to reap their benefits.

According to Pickford and Brown (2006), learners have extremely become assessment-driven in the current culture. Therefore, if the assessment is neglected, especially in cases where there is less assessment attached to elements such as practical skills, students are also likely to attribute less value to those assessment strategies and that may lead them to believe that they do not warrant attention. Thus, assessment options and interventions must be considered and implemented correctly.

HEI—Industry Collaboration

The study also found that another way to enhance the quality of assessment in practical skills was through HEI—industry collaboration to ensure that graduates obtain the requisite practical skills for employability from the work environment. This allowed the learners to interact with the technical tools and technologies in use in the workplace. Industry—HEI collaboration also helps strengthen the assessment of practical skills as companies emphasise the skills currently in demand in the workplace. This helps in enhancing practical skills assessment. Thus, the industry needed to assist HEIs by outlining the skills that were important in the labour market and then strengthening the assessment system so that the graduates have acquired the relevant skills necessary to perform their duties successfully. The HEI—industry collaboration was found to be a critical factor especially in countries that are developing their economies to knowledge-based. These partnerships are important as, in their absence, HEI may end up with programmes, courses, and learning areas and practical skills that are relevant to the future employability of the graduates and hence there is a need to ensure that practical skills be imparted are necessary and useful to the graduates and are relevant to potential employers.

HEI—industry collaboration enhances feedback to the learner and the HEI. In a recent report by Bree et al. (2014) on practical skills assessment, it was found that

the level of engagement with feedback was improved using an incremental/tiered marking system aimed at developing an ‘always improving’ mindset in the students. Perceptions of feedback from both students and educators are important in addressing this issue—Weaver (2006) described that for students to engage with feedback, they may initially require advice and guidance on understanding and using it. For example, educators must realise that more feedback does not always equate to more learning (Kulhavy et al., 1985). From this educator viewpoint, Price et al. (2011) outlined how a content-focused approach to feedback often provides further knowledge in feedback, whereas an educator with a more facilitator-focused approach, will be more centred on the learning process and the development of meta-cognitive skills in the students.

Availability of Teaching/Learning Resources, Staff Development and Use of Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy

It was found that all assessment techniques identified required the necessary resources from the equipment needed to perform the specific tasks to the consumable required for the practical skills teaching and learning. Given constrained budgets with which most of the HEI in the developing, low-income countries, resources are scarce and hence, learners may not get the requisite equipment, tools and consumables that will allow the learners to manipulate the materials so that they can acquire practical skills. Another constraint is on the availability of working spaces in which students can learn so that they are then assessed on the practical skills that were taught. In Zimbabwe, there is a move towards the creation of industrial parks and innovation hubs in HEI that is a commendable move to ensure that the students are acclimatised to the kind of equipment, tools, and technologies that they will use in the actual workplace. The study found that practical skills assessment must go beyond just knowledge development to include the development of other skills such as critical thinking, self-managed learning, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication skills (Poon et al., 2009). Therefore, there is a need to have sufficient resources to ensure that graduates from HEIs have other skills that enhance their employability.

In practical skills assessment, there is a tendency to concentrate all efforts on the technical information, to the extent that this may lead to a lack of time to perform meaningful, conceptually driven inquiry (Hofstein & Lunetta, 2004). Hence, research is a critical component of practical skills development in any country. Thus, governments need to commit more financial resources towards research and innovation. Furthermore, learners can also be fixated on achieving the expected results that may lead to them missing the opportunity to relate the other learning experiences to the practical skills under assessment (Saribas & Bayram, 2009). Practical skills assessment is meant to provide an opportunity for learners to engage in the processes of investigation, feedback, inquiry, reflection, and modification of their ideas. Thus, practical skill assessment sessions must help learners to take control of their learning.

Staff professional development is also a critical factor in enhancing practical skills assessment. Given the advances in technology in the industry, there is a need to keep teaching staff constantly updated about the developments in the practical skills for which they are teaching. While most HEI insists on doctoral qualifications as a standard of staff development, research is inconclusive now as to whether the attainment of a doctoral degree improves the pedagogy of the teaching staff. The staff professional development needs to be in such a way as to keep teaching staff abreast with the changes happening in the industry so that they can impart the relevant skills to students for employability. Thus, periods of work placement in industry are a necessary technique to ensure the skills imparted to learners are the most relevant and current and suitable for the future of work. Therefore, assessment techniques should best be suited to the future of work, but the teaching staff must know what the skills of the future are so that they can actively assess what they know. In the current digital era, numerous technology-based interventions can assist learning, with teaching staff regularly introducing these approaches to their classroom. Embracing digital technologies and literacy in the practical environment is one area certainly worthy of attention.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Practical skills play an important role in the training, education, and development of learners in empowering them with technical, practical, vocational, and soft skills. The critical elements for assessors when designing and implementing any practical skills acquisition session were found to be its format and the associated assessment strategies. In attempts to enhance the practical skills assessment strategies, sometimes there can be concerns with regards to the time burden of the assessment for both learners and assessors, and that not every element of the practical skills may need to be assessed is worth considering at the design stage.

The following recommendations were proposed from the findings of the systematic review:

Assessors must put consideration into the importance of the learning environment in which the practical skills assessment are assessed. Implementing particular assessment methodologies and styles has the potential effect on the learning experience of the learner, as it can also develop their metacognitive and communication skills. It is also important that the ‘purpose’ of the practical skills being assessed is clear for both the learners and the tutors. This implies that the skills assessment programme should be aimed at producing the relevant practical skills for employability and the demands for the ‘jobs of the future’.

HTE institutions should ensure that all the available assessment options and interventions are considered and implemented correctly. It is also necessary to review the practical skills to be assessed and identify whether it is every task/activity that must be assessed. Learners may assign less value to certain tasks in practical skill development, believing they do not warrant attention if less assessment is given to particular

tasks. In addition, assessment practices should be challenging and motivating to the learners.

Assessors should also ensure that learners develop an ability to recognise and appreciate hard work, help them to evaluate the quality of their work and efforts in practical skills acquisition. In addition, to the award of formal qualifications, graduate employability has started to incorporate the skills developed and mastered during the learner's time in HTE institutions. The practical skills component characterises a considerable opportunity for learning. Thus, the assessment format and strategies are also critical for the successful implementation of the assessment process, thus requires considerable attention. Harnessing the power and potential of technology to enhance digital capacity and support learning in the practical skills is a critical aspect requiring to be embraced into the assessment approaches by both learners and assessors alike.

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Chapter 4

Talent Identification, Nurturing and Mentorship: Challenges and Opportunities in the Global Economy



Zinyama Tawanda and Emmanuel Tsara

Abstract This chapter locates the challenges and opportunities on talent identification, nurturing and mentorship in the global economy. Over the years, the desire to attain organisational competitive advantage has occupied renewed attention by organisations. Identifying, nurturing, mentoring, and harvesting talent is becoming a major challenge grappling with organisations across the globe. As a contemporary practice in human capital management, talent identification, nurturing and mentorship is at the epicentre in building and sustaining a transformative human resource in any organisation. Lack of talent recognition, poor rewards, lack of motivation and shallow talent pool are some of the challenges obstructing talent identification and retention in Africa. Zimbabwe has also been seized with the need to innovate and industrialize in its education sector to address the skills deficit and drive the attainment of national development goals. Education 5.0 mantra is reflective of contemporary human capital practices where the education system is designed to match the changing demands in global human capital management. Leadership succession programmes, talent development programmes, incentivising of talent and establishing a match between the skills and competencies to the job in Universities and organisations are key imperatives needed to the competitive transformation of human capital in the twenty-first century.

Keywords Talent · Nurturing · Mentorship · Human capital · Skills · Leadership

Introduction and Background

The locus of this chapter is to unpack contemporary human capital management practices in the twenty-first century and to decipher how best organisations can manage their human capital for organisational growth and productivity. The ability to identify, retain, develop, and deploy talented human capital has occupied renewed attention across the globe. The need to retain a sustainable competitive advantage

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in the global economy for organisations is largely hinged on the ability to maintain a pool of talented and developed professionals who possess the skills and competencies needed in the twenty-first century. With the advent of globalisation and technological advancement, the need to identify, nurture, and mentor talent has been growing (Machado, 2017). For the last two decades, several companies from emerging markets have developed their business beyond their country of origin so as to compete internationally (Bluen, 2013). Studies by the World Economic Forum, the Boston Consulting Group, and the Manpower Group have uncovered that the lack of talent is a worldwide issue, it affects a wide range of positions in numerous areas and nations of the economic world. Countries such as China, India, and Brazil and some emerging economies such as South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and many others reflect a changing of the guard economically with growing emerging markets coming to the fore (Bluen, 2013; Machado, 2017). As the global economy continues to reinvent itself, the issue of talent management that includes talent identification and nurturing remains competitive in a fast-changing global economy becomes increasingly important (Bluen, 2013).

Responding to today's workplace demands, innovative means are to be implemented whereby firms retain and conserve their talented workforce by using new approaches such as talent identification, nurturing, and mentorship (Machado, 2017). Individuals need greater flexibility in their career paths, and organisations need greater flexibility from employees. For instance, big companies such as Microsoft are good examples in terms of how they nurture and manage their talent especially talent that is considered critical in the global economy (Zheng, 2019). The company goes to surprising lengths to help employees tap into their core skills and passions and as well expect continuous learning and growth and know that the most important lessons don't take place in the classroom but the job (Athey, 2004). This implies that the ability to execute business strategy is rooted in the ability to attract, retain, and develop key talent. implies that successful talent identification and development creates the most enduring competition especially in the global economies where companies are facing challenges from the external forces in terms of maintaining competitive advantage.

Interest in talent identification, nurturing and mentorship has proliferated over the years, with a global shortage of leadership talent being touted as one of the highest HR concerns for multinational enterprises (Mucha, 2004). Justification of talent identification usually covers the necessity of early specialization (catch them young doctrine), relatively simple set, and measurements to assess children's potential without going deep into coaching science. At the core of talent management is the idea that "talent" must be found, segmented, nurtured, and placed in pivotal positions that are crucial for the competitive advantage of the firm. The cumulative impact of global demographic trends, combined with ongoing economic uncertainty and aggravated by critical skills shortage creates a powerful talent triple whammy facing the business (Heidrick & Struggles, 2016). Forward-looking organisations are prioritizing talent identification, nurturing, and mentorship to the top of the agenda and are assigning responsibility for aligning business and talent imperatives to senior talent

executives so that they can be able to survive in the global marketplace (Zhang & Bright, 2012).

As the world of work changes globally, the demand for talent identification is becoming one of the greatest opportunities for for-profit and nonprofit organisations in emerging economies. With the young and educated population in Africa, its competition for talent poses both opportunities and challenges as the continent tries to participate in the global economy. However, it remains unknown how best contemporary human resources can be modelled to suit the prevailing global labour dynamics? Universities and institutions have been producing management professionals year after year, but organisations have been affected by the lack of employable professionals (Juneja, 2015). The following objectives are central in this chapter; to assess the emerging challenges to human resources management in the twenty-first century; to understand the implications of talent management, nurturing and mentorship in the global human capital management in the twenty-first century and to devise practical ways to manage modern human capital to meet the current human resources demand in the twenty-first century.

Methodology

This chapter made use of documentary evidence to understand emerging issues on talent identification, nurturing, and mentorship in the global economy. The study made use of journal articles, websites, organisational reports, media reports and newspaper articles to gather data for this chapter. Data for Zimbabwe was also obtained through the critical review of academic journals, media reports, the National Critical Skills Audit Report (2018) and various newspaper articles. Data were analysed through content analysis to develop themes on the topic under review.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A twenty-first-century organisation is facing challenges in human capital management that are effective talent management (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010). Talent and not capital have been at the epicentre of effective organisational management to stir innovation and organisational competitiveness in the twenty-first century (United Nations Development Programme, 2015; Muyia, 2018). Muyia (2018) propounds that the “war for talent” is gradually shifting to become the “war to develop talent”. Implied is that attracting and identifying talent is ceasing to be significant in enhancing the competitiveness of the organisation. Rather, the ability to shape and recoil the individual to match the key skills and competencies needed by the organisation occupies the core position in contemporary human capital management. While talent identification is critical for effective organisational performance, talent management is becoming a fashion trend in modern organisations. Mandeya

reiterates that getting the right talent in place is only half the job since people are not equipment. This implies that talented individuals require nurturing and mentorship to the point that they develop to suit the future roles and responsibilities they have competencies in. Therefore, global human capital management is seized with the need to effectively nurture and mentor talent in organisations to develop and maintain strong leadership in the ever-changing business milieu.

The global environment has changed the way business is conducted but created the requirement for organisations to manage their workforce in a global context (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). In today's global marketplace, talent identification, nurturing, and mentorship represent the greatest challenges for human resources managers as successful talent management requires effective alignment of human capital and business strategies to support organisational financial goals and positively impact shareholder values. Talent is a key success factor for increasing and sustaining organisational performance where talent consists of individual capabilities, experience, knowledge, and intelligence and qualifications (Machando, 2017). In the 1990s, high demand for talented employees has been recorded but due to the shortage of global talent employees, it surpassed the supply. This shortage of talent implied the need to focus on how to identify, nurture and mentor talent in the global business. Machado (2017) coins that, the challenge came to be labelled as "Global Talent Management". Currently, the situations for organisations are complex, dynamic, highly competitive, and extremely unstable. Organisations are challenging each other to obtain and retain talents to sustain their tasks and continue to grow (De Vries, 2011). Organisations strive to sustain their presence in the global marketplace due to related challenges such as globalisation, stiff competition, and technological improvements. Therefore, organisations have shifted their patterns from only focusing on increasing productivity and differentiating their products and services to focusing on their human capital, as employees are the most important resources and asset in many companies. Therefore, what is the future of organisations without effective talent identification, nurturing and mentorship?

Before discussing talent identification, it is important to define talent. Different scholars such as (Gallardo, 2013; Schiemann, 2013) define talent as the ability, capacity, capability, commitment, competency, contribution, experience, knowledge, performance, and potential patterns of thought, feeling, or behaviour and skills that are related to characteristics of people. Talent is equal to competency (ability) multiplied by commitment (willingness) multiplied by contribution (sense of purpose) (Younger et al., 2007). Talent is attributed to those individuals that have the potential to make a positive impact on the organisational performance either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest level of potential (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2003), talent identification is a systematic process to secure general and targeted individual competencies and organisations capabilities that create sustainable value for multiple stakeholders.

Nurturing talent is about knowing your team and enabling each team member to play their strengths by offering the appropriate training and opportunities. Nurturing talent is regarded as the best way for business to truly reach their full potential because

a dis-engaged team will not be productive or motivated (Hewlett & Ashford, 2014). It is the part of the human resources manager to spot the untapped skills of the staff pushing them in the right direction for the business and of course for their fulfilment and job satisfaction. Companies need to create more nurturing cultures within the workplace. Mentorship relates primarily to the identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person. Mentoring is an indefinite, relationship-based activity with several specific but wide-ranging goals. It does not have to be a formal process. The mentor is the facilitator who works with either individual or a group of people over an extended period. The agenda is open and continues to evolve over the longer term. It seeks to build wisdom and the ability to apply skills, knowledge, and experience to new situations and processes. In line with talent retaining talent in the evolving global economies talent mentorship relates to the role of human resources managers as they mentor the young population so they can have the required skills and abilities to be able to contribute to organisational performance.

According to Horvathova (2013), efficient work with talent is based on the building talent identification strategy that will be in line with the organisation's philosophy and business strategy. Talent identification falls under the talent management concept that means the identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals who are of value to an organisation (Chartered Institution of Personnel Development, 2012). Armstrong (2009) observes that talent management is the process of identifying, developing, recruiting, retaining, and deploying talented people who possess special abilities and aptitudes and who can make a difference to organisational performance. Therefore, talent identification is about getting the right people, with the right skills into the right jobs at the right time. It helps the organisation with selecting the required personnel by providing essential knowledge and strategies for improvement and change. This typically implies that talent identification forms the bedrock of strategic human resources planning in the selection and nurturing of future and competent leadership.

Armstrong (2009) talent identification is part of the Strategic Human Resources Planning (SHRP) and talent development where the organisation audits the current pool of employees and assess the skills, knowledge and abilities that are in-house to establish programmes that will align the skills and competencies with future needs of the organisation. In doing so, succession planning has been one of the major SHRP functions in modern-day organisations to identify, develop and deploy relevant talent for the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. Succession planning according to Armstrong (2009) is the process of assessing and auditing the talent in the organisation to answer three fundamental questions; are there enough successors available? are they good enough to take key roles in the longer term? do they have the right skills and competencies? Addressing these questions entails the process to identify the relevant talented individuals who possess the qualities and competencies to fill the skills and capabilities required. Secondly, nurturing and mentorship are then meant to develop these individuals so that they become fit for future roles and responsibilities. This perhaps leads to the need to understand if the organisations especially in developing countries, like Zimbabwe, have the next generation of leaders who can transform human resources into a sustainable competitive

advantage in the global market. What current practices and initiatives characterise talent management for effective succession planning in developing countries like Zimbabwe?

Mwanzi et al. (2017) subscribe to the view that organisational adaptability and success is hinged on the ability to employ talented people (best performers) and to effectively implement the talent management processes like talent identification, recruitment, retention, and deployment. While it can be generally accepted that having the right talent for the right jobs could be one of the ways to address the global human capital demands in the twenty-first century, having the talent alone is not sufficient to address the changing workforce needs and demands. Rather, talent management is required as means to shape and recoil the talented professionals to suit the demands of the skills deficit in the country. Mandeya reiterates that getting the right talent in place is only half the job since people are not equipment. This implies that talented individuals require nurturing and mentorship to the point that they develop to suit the future roles and responsibilities they have competencies in. Talent Management is understood as the science of using Strategic Human Resources Planning (SHRP) to enhance the effectiveness of the organisation in achieving its goals and objectives (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2012; Parker, 2017). Managing and developing talent is a continuous process that requires the institutionalization of culture for talent identification, nurturing and mentorship. This challenges contemporary leaders and managers to have a skill set of identifying, nurturing, and mentoring talented professionals to have the right set of people in the right positions.

Lee (2014) opines that the development of education hubs across the globe has been associated with the desire to develop local talent, attract foreign talent, and repatriate diasporic talent. This followed the observation that there was a dearth of talented professionals across the globe, yet the Universities are churning out management professionals each year, but organisations face a huge shortage of employable professionals (Juneja, 2015; Parker, 2017). Failure by Universities and organisations to effectively develop and nurture talent has left many talented people unemployable hence, talent has to be catalysed through nurturing to meet the changing needs of human capital management in the twenty-first century (Juneja, 2015). Talent Management Series (TMS) observes that African suffers from a deficit in skilled and talented human capital management. The major challenge has been associated with the education system that has over the years failed to identify, develop, and nurture talents that are relevant in the labour market. Given that extant literature points out poor talent identification, nurturing and retention in Africa, how can African leaders and managers be able to transform the human capital towards a transformative and sustainable human capital responding to the changing labour demands in the twenty-first century? The question provokes the need for innovative and creative means to ensure that talent has been harnessed, nurtured, and deployed for the benefit of the nation and the continent.

The Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory posits that the development, and advancement of countries, hinges on the ability to have a creative class through effective human capital management (Azman et al., 2016). According to the human capital theory, education enhances the productivity of organisations and the competitiveness of the organisation (Bond et al., 2018). Using the resource-based view of the human capital theory, investing in human capital is a source of organisational competitive advantage (Dobbs et al., 2008; Garavan & Carbery, 2012; Tan, 2014). This implies that talent identification, nurturing and mentorship is coined on the need to invest in the human capital through identifying the top performers, developing them and strategically placing them in positions that aides the competitiveness of the organisations. The theory further posits that there is a need for systematic acquisition of skills and knowledge by the employees under the formal guidance of the organisation so that they develop relevant competencies towards the competitiveness of the organisation (Bond et al., 2018). This implies that nurturing and mentoring talent can be a form of enhancing the systematic acquisition of knowledge by the employees of the organisation to enhance the competitiveness of the organisation. The chapter, therefore, aims to interrogate the dynamic, issues and challenges of talent identification, nurturing and mentorship towards a transformative human capital in the twenty-first century in line with the ideals of the human capital theory.

Challenges to Talent Management in Africa

Lack of Motivation

Talent identification and nurturing in the African context has been largely constrained due to poor remuneration that has demotivated the current workforce and pushed away much talent in organisations. In the last two decades, there has been a massive migration of talented professionals from the country in search of greener pastures in the developed world (Koketso & Rust, 2012; Mwanzi et al., 2017; Musakuro & De Klerk, 2021). It is estimated that more than 30% of Africa's talented professionals are in the developed world. Lack of motivation induced with poor economic conditions in most African countries has to a large extent negatively impacted the ability of African countries to identify, nurture and deploy talent to enhance the competitiveness of the organisations (Nkomentaba, 2014; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). This implies that African countries face challenges in attracting talent and the ability to develop talent due to the poor remunerations that are associated with a lack of motivation to the talented individuals.

Limited Investment in Human Capital Development

Lack of commitment and investment in the development of human capital is another challenge that Africa is facing in human capital development (Koketso & Rust, 2012; Simoes and Leroy, 2014). Investing in education and training entails the ability to fund for talent development programmes to develop and nurture talent as a strategic initiative to broaden the talent pool. Investing in education and training also comes at the times where Africa has the lowest human capital development that was envisaged with the United Nations Human Development Index that provided that 38 out of 42 countries with the lowest human development are in Africa (Simoes & Leroy, 2014).

Lack of Recognition

Management in most African countries has not been more concerned with identifying talent and recognizing top performers as key and valuable assets that can enhance sustainable human capital management in the capital. Koketso and Rust (2012) aver that lack of recognition of talented individuals by management is a serious challenge to effective identification, nurturing and mentorship of talent in Africa. In some cases, there is a growing trend of ageing leadership in many organisations that are no longer supporting the identification and development of talent in organisations (Koketso & Rust, 2012; Mwanzi et al., 2017). As a result, there is a loss of talented officials because they are not recognized in terms of their talents and competencies. This implies that there is a need for the development of leaders who can identify and nurture talent for sustainable human capital management in the twenty-first century.

Shallow Talent Pool

Africa faces a critical shortage in skilled talent regardless of the ability of Universities to produce graduates each year. The Universities in Africa have been failing to effectively produce skilled and talented professionals that have the skills and capabilities to match the African labour market requirements. African schools have been more associated with riots and strikes affecting the quality of talent identification and management in Universities.

Talent Identification and Human Capital Management in Zimbabwe

A Reflection of the National Skills Audit in Zimbabwe

The National Skills Audit of (2018) revealed that the country has a wide deficit in terms of critical skills that are needed for the attainment of vision 2030 and other national development priorities. Regardless of the country having a literacy rate of 90%, the country is wallowing from an acute deficit of skilled professionals in different key sectors of the economy (National Skills Audit, 2018; Mukeredzi, 2018). The audit unearthed a deficit of 90% in engineering, 97% in natural and applied sciences, 88% in Agriculture and 95% in health sciences. Ngara (2017), is of the view that despite the progress that has been made by the government in making the nation a leader of literacy in Africa, the country lags other countries in the national programming for gifted youths and children. These deficits are taking place at a time where the country aims to achieve an upper-middle-income economy by 2030. The shifts in the global economy have introduced the desire to recoil the knowledge that is acquired by human capital to match the skills gap that is manifest in the twenty-first century. This implies that the country is faced with a daunting task to identify and align the right professionals with the relevant skills and competencies that are relevant in the changing global economy. How best can developing nations like Zimbabwe manage to retain, develop, and deploy individuals with skills and competencies relevant to the global economy?

In recent times, the departure of skilled and talented professionals has been witnessed in Zimbabwe's public and private sectors owing to poor rewards and compensation (Voice of the People (VOP), 2014; Nkala et al., 2021). While talent identification and management are viewed as a strategic imperative for national development, lack of affective talent attraction through rewards and benefits has been a major challenge affecting the strategic role of talent management for the development of talented professionals in the country. Just as in many African countries, Zimbabwe has lost a number of skilled and talented professionals to the developed countries due to poor salaries and rewards coupled with decades of economic stagnation. This impacts negatively towards attracting talent and retention of talent from both the domestic and the foreign labour market. Consequently, there is a misplacement of talents as individuals join a specific sector not because they have talents, but it is paying them.

Identifying, Nurturing and Mentoring Talent Under the Education 5.0 Mantra

In Zimbabwe, the implementation of Education 5.0 witnessed a seismic shift in the history of innovation and industrialization. More precisely, it has implications for the need to identify and retain talented professionals who will drive the new education mantra towards its success. Education 5.0 model is a heritage-based education anchored in promoting teaching, research, community services, innovation, and industrialization towards the attainment of vision 2030 for Zimbabwe (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, 2019). The introduction of the new education curricula in Universities is believed to be the game-changer in the development of the nations. This is from the hindsight that innovation and industrialization are driven by committed and motivated professionals. As such, the need to identify and develop, mentor and coach talented professionals to effectively lead the new development mantra in education and skills is of paramount importance. Wanzala (2017) points out that Universities have been viewed as institutional hubs for the creation of talented human capital that is necessary for enhancing the drive towards achieving national development goals in the twenty-first century. This implies that the education 5.0 mantra is the right apparatus in place for attracting and identifying talented professionals to acquire the skills and capabilities necessary for the transformation of the country. An important question that rises is what initiatives have been on the ground to support the vision and objectives of the innovation and industrialization mantra under Education 5.0 in line with the identification and nurturing of talented individuals?

Strides to innovate in Zimbabwe have been seen through the creation of innovation hubs, synchronization of the University curricula and the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework as ground-breaking initiatives to support heritage-based education. However, the creation of innovation hubs and synchronization of the University curricula alone without the identifying and nurturing of best performers (talented individuals) is inadequate. Innovation and creativity are born out of competent and talented leadership, hence, the need to attract, nurture and deploy talent. Therefore, it implies that talent identification and nurturing should be a centrepiece of the organisational culture and practice to institutionalize learning and development (Bernard Nkala et.al., 2021) in the country. Talent identification programmes have been more skewed in a sport where top performers would be supported to strengthen their abilities leaving out the critical skills that are responsive to the global shifts and the new development imperatives. South Africa is one of the examples that have managed to establish the National Skills Fund that targets to respond to the development of required skills and targeting gaps in skills through funding training and other community-based initiatives (South Africa National Skills Development Strategy 3). There is nothing wrong with transferring such a good policy initiative and transforming the human capital in the country that will produce competent and skilled personnel relevant to the demands of the labour market in the twenty-first century.

Critical Skills for National Development Strategy 1 (NDS 1 2021–2025) and Vision 2030

Zimbabwe aims to become a middle-income economy by 2030. The attainment of Vision 2030 hinges on innovation and creativity through the availability of skills and competencies that are relevant in the twenty-first century. What boggles one's mind is how can the transformation in the human capital contribution towards the attainment of these national development objectives?

Science, Technology, and Innovation

The largest skills deficit in Zimbabwe from the National Critical Skills Audit (2018) was in science and technology. There have been concerns over the availability of obsolete skills in Science and technology especially in the banking sector in Zimbabwe (*Sunday Mail*, 2021). The rapid digitalisation and growth of the information society have also shifted the skills and competencies that are needed to transform the country into a middle-income economy by 2030. The growth of the information society has also resulted in the development of big data where organisations ought to have big data analytics at the epicentre of organisational management. The current wave of industry 4.0 that is the fourth industrial revolution has brought many changes and approaches in economic systems. Resultantly, there is a call for a new set of skills and competencies relevant to the digitalisation wave. Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs), space science and nanotechnologies are becoming topical in influencing global economic systems. This poses an obligation for Zimbabwe to identify, develop and nurture talents in that specific area. Skills in geospatial science and earth observation, space science, space engineering, space operations and satellite launches are in critical demand for the advancement of Zimbabwe's modernization and industrialization agenda (*The Patriot*, 2019). It is beyond any reasonable doubt that science, technology, and innovation are key for the realization of Vision 2030 and the transformation of the human capital in the country. As such, mainstream interventions in the development of modern human capital requires harnessing skills in managing artificial intelligence, cloud computing, robotics, drones, and 3D printing as key innovation drivers in the ear of industry 4.0. Digital. This implies that there is a need by the country to invest more in engineering and technology to harness talents and skills like geospatial engineering and earth observation as they are key imperatives to turn around the economy of the country.

The achievement of sustainable development and Vision 2030 hinges on the development of human capital with skills and competencies in space exploration like planetary science, astrophysics, space weather and remote sensing (*The Patriot*, 2019). Therefore, funding and talent attraction in the field of space exploration should be part of the national skills development plan in the country. Initiatives should be mainstreamed towards enhancing the development of skills and competencies in these

sectors for the development of the nation. Therefore, from the human capital theory, investing in identifying talented young minds in science, technology and innovation is a gateway towards addressing the skills deficit in this sector. The National Skills Audit (2018) revealed a 90% deficit in engineering and a 97% deficit in natural and applied sciences (National Skills Audit, 2018; Mukeredzi, 2018). Therefore, effort in scientific and technical skills development is essential for the growth of the country. This will also ensure that the country will not largely rely on importing critical skills from other countries (Mabika, 2020).

Skills Demand in Agriculture

Zimbabwe is largely an agro-based economy as it is gifted with good climatic conditions necessary for agriculture and crop production. This means that the attainment of vision 2030 also hinges on agriculture as a critical to ensure that the development initiatives are grasped. At the core of Vision 2030 and the revival of the Agricultural sector lies a cardinal question on how relevant talent can be identified and nurtured towards the realization of the middle-income economy by 2030? This comes from the hindsight that Zimbabwe was once a 'breadbasket' of Southern Africa where it was able to export Agricultural produce to other countries. It is saddening, however, that the country has turned from the 'breadbasket' to the 'begging basket' with an over-reliance on exports despite the vast land and good climatic conditions. Mukeredzi (2018) observes that more than 68% of the individuals in Zimbabwe are employed in the Agricultural sector yet production has not been so satisfactory in the previous years. Zimbabwe adds value and beneficiaries a little portion of its produce in Agriculture and the rest is exported in raw form. For instance, the country adds value and beneficiaries only 30% of cotton and in 2017 only 2% out of the 240 million kilograms of tobacco was valued-added in the country (Mnangagwa, 2018). This is because the country exports most of its products in raw form attracting low value because it lacks processing, refining and fabrication (Mnangagwa, 2018). The situation is quite disheartening considering that the country has the potential to add value to the vast endowments of the resources at its disposal. Given that the situation remains like that, the attainment of the objectives of the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS 1, 2021–2025) and Vision 2030 remains a distant dream. As such, what is to be done in transforming the sector to contribute towards the NDS 1 and Vision 2030?

Zimbabwe needs a tailor-made national skills development framework that develops skilled personnel in line with the human capital needs of the country towards the transformation of the economy. The chapter advances that the country lacks relevant skills and competencies that are relevant to the specific sector demands in the country. There is a gap between literacy and skills that are relevant to transform the Agricultural sector towards Vision 2030. Taking a bird's view in China reveals that, Beijing Agricultural University managed to research in agricultural biotechnology and helped to turn around the Chinese economy (Karplus & Deng, 2007).

China managed to make advances in Agriculture through research in agriculture-biotechnology and managed to apply technologies in Agriculture to develop the crop varieties that are suitable to the local conditions. It, therefore, applies that, transformation in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector can also be driven through innovation and creativity in the sector. Zimbabwe, therefore, needs this capability to ensure that there is a transformation of the Agricultural sector towards the attainment of the NDS 1 and Vision 2030. Therefore, this implies that the sector needs individuals to have technological and research skills that will close the gap between literacy and the skills that the sector has. The development of skills in research and bio-technology dovetails towards value addition, transformation and beneficiation in the Agricultural sector that leapfrogs to the attainment of Vision 2030. This implies that efforts should be directed towards identifying and nurturing skills in agricultural research and innovation to transform the human capital towards national skills demand in the twenty-first century.

Devolution and Skills Development in Zimbabwe

Section 264 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act 2013 provides for the devolution of powers and responsibilities to provincial and metropolitan and local authorities to ensure that they are vehicles for national socio-economic development. Among other aspects, devolution is expected to champion local economic development to enhance the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and local resource management (Madanhire, 2019). The need to enhance development at the local level implies that relevant skills and competencies should be matched with the resources to be given for devolution. In other words, the devolution agenda might not be successful without bridging the skills gap that are prevalent in the country's human capital. Chigwata (2019) observes that devolution entails administrative autonomy apart from fiscal and political autonomy that entails that there is a need to attract and retain necessary skills and talents to effectively drive the devolution agenda. Devolution in Zimbabwe is being implemented as a key enabler of the NDS 1 and Vision 2030. What baffles the mind is how best can the country identify, nurture and mentor talents that are relevant to build the national skills pool required to drive the success of the agenda? Manyange (2020) observes that devolution also entails economic empowerment under that people must directly benefit from the natural resources at their disposal. However, the paradox that is currently prevailing is that rural communities have not been contributing much to industrialization and local resource value addition and beneficiation. It points out to lack of adequate skills and knowledge to turn the natural endowments at our disposal into meaningful value products that enhance national development. Rural areas should be industrial hubs where production, value-addition and beneficiation can be achieved. It implies that there is an urgent need to upscale the skills and competencies from the communities and nurtures them to feed them into the national development goals. In other words, the devolution agenda should factor into place the need to identify talent and nurture

talent at the community level. Mainstream interventions should be directed towards retaining local talent and developing local talent so that communities are equipped with modern skills that will help in the implementation of the development initiatives.

New Skills Set in the Wake of the COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to human capital and skills needed in the twenty-first century. World Economic Forum (WEF) (2020) projected that the technical skills that are needed in most sectors across the globe are slowly becoming outdated due to the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is projected that by 2022, at least 54% of the employees will require to reskill and upskill for the employees to respond to the workplace demands due to the changes imposed with the COVID-19 pandemic. The national skills audit unearthed a 95% skills deficit in health sciences that implies that the hope of the nation in fighting against the COVID-19 is currently on 5% skills availability in the critical sector like health (Mukeredzi, 2018; World Bank, 2021a, 2021b). This implies that the nation is highly knowledgeable but there is a misalignment of the knowledge against the industry expectations. Parents make a huge investment in education through paying high tuition fees and other necessities for the education system expecting that children will gain skills and competencies that are relevant to pay dividends in driving the national economy forward. It becomes saddening that the knowledge that is acquired does not match the skills demanded innovation and development. Matinde advances that the skills shortage in health sciences could be the reason for many people going outside of the country to seek specialist care like heart transplants in India and other countries. It, therefore, implies that there is an urgent need to ensure that young talents are taught how to learn to adapt and constantly learn in this ever-changing environment. This awakens the government that there is an urgent need to develop and implement initiatives that are earmarked in discovering talents in the field of health sciences and incentivise the talent through mentorship programmes and nurturing to ensure that they are prepared to face the ‘wicked’ problems that are currently attaining in the twenty-first century.

Currently, the COVID-19 has accelerated the rate of digitalisation in organisations that has been accompanied by the desire for digital skills as key imperatives during the COVID-19 era. The current work from home practice has called the need for digital skills and incentives towards digital migration to see through the workforce that can address workplace issues in the COVID-19 era. It is also imperative to indicate that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has raised an urgent need to enhance digital skills and innovativeness in rural areas where previously digital technologies have been more skewed in the urban areas. This implies that the need to enhance digital skills uptake in rural schools is no longer a choice under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, talented students in rural schools should also be equipped with digital analytical skills so that they are relevant in the global mainstream economy. This calls for initiatives towards rural digitalisation and incentivising the development

and uptake of digital skills in rural areas to ensure that there is a harmonization of skills and competencies in the global economy. Rural digitalisation is also viewed in the light of Sustainable Development Goal number 4 on Universal access to education. There is an obligation therefore to ensure that the COVID-19 does not act as a barrier towards access to education to the students and learners in the rural areas in the country. It remains a proactive approach in ensuring that mechanisms are in place to ensure that talent has been identified, nurtured, and mentored to feed into the national skills for the country to grow (Lee, 2014). Africa has a long history of the education system that has a high literacy rate but suffers from the availability of relevant skills needed in the industry (Lee, 2014; World Bank, 2021a, 2021b). Digitalisation of the rural areas in light of the COVID-19 pandemic will ensure that students are prepared to be developed with the digital skills that are needed in the twenty-first century rather than having a high literacy rate with 'dry' skills that are not relevant.

Nurturing Talent Towards Africa's Agenda 2063

Africa's agenda 2063 is anchored on the need to make Africa a global powerhouse that is competitive in the globe. Among other goals, agenda 2063 aims to enhance inclusive and sustainable growth in Africa, enhance development that is people-driven, make Africa an influential global player and enhance good governance, democracy, and justice in Africa. Therefore, the achievement of Africa's agenda 2063 hinges on the ability of the human capital in African countries to contribute towards the growth and national development of their respective countries. This has also come in the times where Africa has the African Mining Vision (AMV) that aims to ensure that there is beneficiation of Africa from its depletable resources (Mnangagwa, 2018). The irony that exists in Africa is that it has huge mineral endowments, and it is one of the global suppliers of raw materials, but it fails to fully create value chains that are beneficial to the continent for development. Africa accounts for less than 1% in gold value addition and beneficiation in the global market yet some countries that do not even mine gold are leaders in gold beneficiation and value addition (Mnangagwa, 2018). This reflects a critical deficit in Africa's human capital to ensure that necessary skills and technologies are lined up to drive for beneficiation and value addition of the country. This also implies that most African countries largely export raw materials rather than finished products that hinders the ability to achieve inclusive and sustainable development by the year 2063. This misnomer is a direct challenge to African leaders and policy practitioners to ensure that initiatives have been lined up to develop the skills in the African continent that are competitive in the global market and that will add value to the African market. This is also situated in the context of the African Free Continental Trade Area that seeks to ensure that there is the promotion of growth and trade in African countries. This only takes place where

the human capital is equipped with relevant skills and competencies in the global economy.

Discussion of Findings

The chapter aimed at understanding the issues and challenges on talent identification, nurturing and mentorship through a review of literature on the key concepts. From the findings, talent identification, nurturing and mentorship is at the epicentre of organisational management and sustainable human capital management. The ability to plan, manage and deploy talent has a transformative power towards the turnaround of the country in terms of growth and development. As noted by the human capital theory, investing in human resources yields considerable benefits in enhancing the competitiveness of the organisation through the transformative power that effective human capital management through learning and development has. However, most African countries including Zimbabwe are pinned down with a limited talent pool and a lack of talent retention strategies thereby negating the ability of the countries to benefit from the talented professionals in the continent. Most African countries like Zimbabwe have been on the drive to enhance the literacy rate in their countries. Ironically, it still suffers from talented and employable graduates. This implies that talent identification and effective talent management has not been at the core of education curricula in African countries.

Talent has become a precious commodity and how firms manage talent has a potentially great impact on their performance in the ever-changing global environment. However, the chapter advances that while talent management is of prime significance towards the transformation of human capital in the twenty-first century, it has often occupied a peripheral position in most African countries. In Zimbabwe, the introduction of the education 5.0 mantra ushered the dawn of the new era in the education system towards an innovative and transformative education system. Talent identification and development should however be part of the reform initiative to ensure that it becomes an institutionalized culture for the identification and retention of talented professionals. Talent identification and attraction have mostly been affected by lack of motivation in terms of benefits and compensations triggering a migration of labour from African countries to developed countries. It logically follows that mobilisation of resources is a key imperative towards the development of talent in African countries like Zimbabwe. Targeted interventions should be pursued in enhancing the transformation of the human capital and harvesting talent from institutions and organisations. It is time for the management and leadership to be awakened with the realities that talent identification, nurturing and mentorship occupies a strategic position in human capital management. Against this background, limited talent identification and retention in the countries should push management and leadership to devise mainstream interventions in addressing human capital needs in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study aimed to unpack opportunities and challenges on talent identification, nurturing and mentoring towards a transformative human capital in the twenty-first century. It can be concluded that talent identification occupies a central position in transformative human capital in Africa and enhancing the attainment of national development priorities. Talent management has not been part of human capital management in most countries like Zimbabwe. This has over the years triggered the talent flight from the country to other countries in search of greener pastures. Effective organisational transformation, the competitiveness of the human capital should be matched with developing and nurturing talent to meet the contemporary human capital needs and demands in the twenty-first century. Human capital transformation remains key for organisational competitiveness and development. The chapter recommends the following.

Aligning Talent Management Strategy with Organisational Strategy

There is a need for the development of talent management strategies in organisations to ensure that talent has been harnessed and developed. The overall strategy of the organisation should be synchronized with the talent management strategy to ensure that there is effective human capital development.

Talent Management and Development Programmes

There is an urgent need to implement talent management programmes in Universities and organisations. The endeavor will be anchored on the need to nurture future leaders who are talented to effectively perform in the dynamic and complex environment. The ability to attract, retain and deploy talented leadership in organisations is at the epicentre for organisational effectiveness and adaptability. As noted in the ongoing discussion, attracting talent is different from identifying talent. It relates to the ability to motivate talented professionals to participate in talent management programmes. This is against the hindsight that there has been long-term underinvestment for retaining and developing talented human capital across the globe. As such, there is an urgent need for the funding and development of the talent development programmes at Universities and organisations to ensure that individuals with key competencies that contribute towards the sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation are realized and nurtured to be the pioneers of national development.

Leadership Succession Programmes

There is a need for the implementation of leadership succession programmes in organisations. Despite the knowledge on the value of succession planning as a key enabler for organisational competitive advantage for retaining talented and competent leadership, the practice of identifying the right talent and nurturing that talent has been lacking in human capital management. Though leadership succession programmes can be costly to implement in organisations, the investment is worth undertaking than making a poor appointment that can obstruct organisational growth and development. Nurturing future leaders is premised on the need to create an organisational competitive advantage that differentiates an organisation from other organisations.

Incentivising Talent

There is a need for talent attraction in organisations to ensure that the organisations recruit the best talents that will anchor organisational competitiveness. Talent attraction has been hampered in recent years with poor salaries and benefits. These conditions had created a wave of skills flight bearing negative consequences towards talent attraction and retention. Therefore, organisations should enhance the commitment in reviewing the salaries and benefits for talented professionals to prevent the flight of talent and skills to other countries in search of greener pastures.

Job, Skills, and Competencies Match

The development of skills and competencies should match the current labour demands in modern-day industries. This comes against the backdrop that Universities have been producing graduates year after year, but industry suffers from limited employable and talented professionals. Education 5.0 in Zimbabwe should be strengthened with the development and identification of talented students to ensure that innovation and industrialization have been attained by matching the skills and competencies of the graduates.

Scholarships for Talented Academics

The government should ensure that scholarships are available for talented academics so that they are helped in nurturing their talents that will contribute to the overall skills pool of the country. Just like other countries, scholarships should be motivating talented academics to pursue excellence in their respective academic disciplines. This

will help the talented students to develop talents that are relevant in the mainstream economy.

Rural Digitalisation

There is a need to mobilise resources and efforts to enhance digitalisation in rural areas to cope up with the new realities of the twenty-first century. The deficit in digital skills deficit in the country should awaken the authorities that there is an urgent need to pursue digitalisation in rural areas. This will go a long way in enhancing the attainability of SDG 4 on universal access to education that dovetails to the attainment of Vision 2030 by the government.

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Chapter 5

Digitalisation of Human Resources Systems and Process Necessary for Public Sector Transformation in Zimbabwe



Gweshe Gay Tapiwa, Pardon Pedzisai, Nkala Bernard, and Chiware Mervis

Abstract The twenty-first-century public sector HR management calls for the integration of systems with a strong emphasis on embracing digitalisation and automation. The paradigm shifts call for the need to integrate all functions with digital technology to effectively and efficiently manage processes to achieve HRM goals. This chapter examines the digitalisation of HR systems as a necessity for effective public sector HRM in Zimbabwe. Methodically, the chapter deploys qualitative research methods, data is analysed using content analysis and lessons drawn from previously propounded literature. There has been a slow transition from traditional public sector personnel management to digital human resources management attributed to the bureaucracies, lack of strong investment case, weak automation and technological skills base, and absence of policy framework to guide in the adoption of technology in HR processes. Public sector literature and practice show the link between digitalisation and human resources management in Zimbabwe is weakly conceptualised. There is the absence of digital HR platforms to support processes of personnel record keeping, hiring, retaining, and training of workforce as the public sector continues to rely on inefficient, paper-intensive HR systems. Although digital adoption in HR functions like payroll and pension benefits management were adopted in the last decade, unexpected delays and inefficiencies are still experienced in responding to public service choirs and demands. Employees' productivity and performance management are still based on traditional practices ignoring the benefits of digital technology that could help improve turnaround times and instil a strong public service performance culture. It is highly recommended that the public

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sector strongly invests in automation and digital HR technologies including building adequate capacities to support e-HR systems. Policy review is necessary to be able to create technology responsive procedures and processes supporting doing business the twenty-first century way.

Keywords Digitalisation · Human resources systems · Public sector · Technology

Introduction and Background

Over the past few years, the use of Information Communication Technologies known as 'electronic or digital government' meant to enhance public sector management, has become increasingly popular (Asgarkhani, 2005: 466). Consequently, public human resources systems have been directly and indirectly swayed by these global trends that have been affecting the nature of work in most organisations. Research reveals that twenty-first-century labour productivity can be increased almost indefinitely by infusing appropriate technology (Zinyama & Nhema, 2016: 15). Traditionally, the public sector has been dominated by the traditional public sector personnel management approach. This approach required human resources managers to manually warehouse personnel records in documents, files and physical strongholds and retrieve personnel information for promotion and deployment planning (Adekunle, 2018: 61). This approach has not been an effective HRM approach due to its analogous nature that is cumbersome time-consuming that result in unexpected delays and inefficiencies. An emerging digital governance phenomenon has risen thus marginalising 'traditional' organisationally based personnel management. This is widely known as digital governance. Literature review shows that the introduction of digital governance is an attempt to reduce traditional hierarchies in governmental practices and create an environment where information flow is bi-directional (Asgarkhani, 2005: 466).

Modern trends in the fourth industrial revolution have witnessed a heavy acceleration towards enhancing working processes. This has been heavily attributed to the technological inventions and reinventions that have turned around the business on a global scale. The concept of digitization has not spared strategic business units at all operational and strategic levels. Value addition through digitalisation calls for effective interaction of systems at all functional levels. In terms of Human Resource Management, more emphasis must be placed on digitalisation and automation to manage efficiently and effectively 'people' in line with the fourth industrial revolution dictates. Digitalisation in Human Resources Management must ensure every process and procedure at every stage is well automated and guided towards the achievement of goals.

Information and Communication Technology has significantly improved the efficiency of the HR units in terms of recruitment, selection, training and development, remuneration, time management and other HR-related activities, Samson & Agrawal (2020). The benefit thus, enabling organisations to maximize profitability by cutting

costs associated with the HR activities. For bigger institutions that deal with larger volumes of HR data, digitalisation and automation of HR systems are necessary. The evolutions in Information and Communication Technology have positively impacted HR processes and procedures such as recruitment, automated selection procedures, virtual training (workshops and meetings), digitalised remuneration systems among other HR fundamentals. Berzinya (2018) also alluded that in recent times, software elements of artificial intelligence have greatly assisted HR managers from initial recruitment stages up to the analysing of employees' emotional intelligence stages. Virtual elements such as the internet, email, visited web pages, frequently opened documents can assist in measuring productivity. This helps HR managers to assess behaviours and take corrective actions where necessary. Twenty-first-century HRM calls for highly digitalised and automated systems to ensure robust processes and procedures are implemented for improved enterprise performance. In highly bureaucratic, paper-intensive, and narrow structures, productivity is difficult to account for especially in public sector structures with centralized HR data management systems.

This digital paradigm has dramatically transformed the public human resources management processes through the introduction of digital human resources systems. According to Adekunle (2018), the digital transformation of human resources is a construct with which we refer to the processes of both digitizing and digitalising staff or personnel management processes for an effective and efficient workforce. It entails the strategic transformation that requires crosscutting organisational change and the implementation of digital technologies. This provokes changes in personnel record keeping, hiring, retaining, and training of the workforce. In the same vein, Fedorova et al. (2019: 2) reiterated that digital technologies are used in various HR processes, most noticeably in such areas as working with large amounts of data (big data), computer-aided training, using artificial intelligence for personnel selection and evaluation, organising employee feedback online and several other areas. Consequently, it requires workers to adopt new skill sets needed to work in jobs that emerge or change because of increased datafication, robotisation and automation (Meijerink et al., 2018: 1).

Zimbabwe's public human resources management systems must be transformed to be able to meet the twenty-first-century service challenges efficiently and effectively. Digitalising human resources not only transform prevailing personnel processes into objective, transparent and accountable processes, it also invariably births a functional mechanism for sustainable development (Adekunle, 2018: 62).

These potential benefits of digitalising human resources systems must be strategically planned for and properly supported by proper legislative frameworks, sound technology infrastructure that create a favourable environment and enable cultural values. It is against the backdrop that the chapter seeks to examine the digitalisation of HR systems as a necessity for effective public sector HRM in Zimbabwe. This digitisation will transform the role of the civil servants and the nature of HRM practices in Zimbabwe by answering the following cardinal questions:

- (a) How does digitalisation affect public HRM outcomes in Zimbabwe?

- (b) What strategies and key policy considerations should be made for the successful digitalisation of HRM systems in Zimbabwe?
- (c) That knowledge, skills and abilities do public human resources managers need to effectively implement digitalised HRM?

Methodology

This chapter studies the concept of Digitalisation as a necessity for Public Transformation in Human Resources Systems and Processes in Zimbabwe. Data was collected from a documentary search. A wide variety of academic journals have been used. These comprise contemporary and historical peer-reviewed journals, government policy documents, academic books and newspapers. The lessons are drawn from past and current experiences in the public sector within the context of Zimbabwe. Through this focused qualitative desk research methodology, the research concludes the entire public human resources management context and examines the implications of digitalisation on the systems in Zimbabwe.

Literature Review

Digitalisation and Human Resources Management

The term digitalisation as propounded by Pieriegud (2016) was used by Robert Wachal who used the term in the ‘digitalisation of society and explain its origin as the result of more widespread use of digital technologies. Kayerann (2015) also defined the term digitalisation as the networking of people and things and the convergence of the real and virtual worlds that are enabled by Information and Communication Technology. It can therefore be deduced that the term digitalisation can be used to define the integration and activities units Information Communication Technology. Digitalisation is the one factor that has systematically impacted the field of Human Resources Management. Digital Human Resources, that some literature refers to as electronic- Human Resources Management, seeks to transform work processes to be self-driven and automated. Federova et al. (2019) alluded that digitalisation, automation and robotisation have a significant impact on the labour market transformation. HR digital transformation is thus a purposeful process of moving from the analogue data in information into digital HRM information so that it can be ready for automated processing, Strohmeier (2007).

Digitalisation in Zimbabwe's Public Sector

According to Henry Chalu et al. (2020); in his journal, the key powers that motivate institutions to take on Information and Communication Technology-driven Human Resources Solutions are the necessity for financial stability, quality services, higher performance, and organisation culture information. These key business strategies will rest fully on effective Human Resources Management coupled with well-crafted Information and Communication Technology Solutions. It is, therefore, necessary for institutions, including the public sector at large to embrace digital Human Resource Solutions for effective guidance of Human Resources and other functions towards achievements of the overall objectives.

The last decade has witnessed immense technological inventions and reinvention in organisations at all levels. This continual improvement has extended to all strategies. For example, functions such as Accounting and Finance, Marketing, Manufacturing, Security Systems have seen lots and lots of improvement due to the integration of units with Information and Communication Technology. This has however been a different case in Human Resources Management. There has been a considerably slow vertical movement in the building of digital systems to effectively manage Human Resources. Walinda (2013) observes that many developing nations still lay behind in adopting Electronic—Human Resources Management Systems, despite their obvious advantages. In that context, this means the concept of Electronic—Human Resources Management or digitalisation is well within the initial stages in developing nations, of which Zimbabwe is not an exception.

Theoretical Framework

In this research, it is imperative to assess the effectiveness of various theories relating to the digitalisation of work systems. This provides a benchmark and guidelines for launching, implementing, redesigning, and evaluating current systems. Several theories have been developed to explain the importance of information and communication technology but the mother of all theories, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is regarded as essential for anyone willing to understand user acceptance of technology. It is also regarded as the only theory that has captured the most attention of the information systems community. Many of the preceding theories were developed from the TAM. This chapter will also review the Theory of Reasoned Action *vis a vis* their applicability in the digitalisation of Human Resources systems and processes in the public sector in Zimbabwe.

Technology Acceptance Model

With the consistent advancement and dynamism of technology, business organisations and state enterprises in the twenty-first century are faced with no real option but to accept the changes in the status quo. Technological advancements coupled with industrial needs in the 1970s and adoption resistance by organisations motivated researchers to want to interrogate and recommend better ways of doing business profitably. In 1985, Davis, F developed the Technology Acceptance Model, in which he proposed that system use is a response that can be explained or predicted by user motivation, that, in turn, is directly influenced by an external stimulus consisting of the actual system’s features and capabilities (Fig. 5.1).

Fred Davis (1985) suggested that users of technology can be stimulated and 3 factors that can be used to explain this are; Perceived ease of use, Perceived usefulness, and attitude towards using the system. In this model, Davis (1985) explained that the above factors have a direct effect on each other. The attitude of the user towards technology was perceived to be influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use with perceived ease of use. The model, in the application, is clearly of the factors that can be considered to stimulate acceptance of technology in the management of Human Resources in organisations.

In the Zimbabwean Context, as has been previously alluded to, the digitalisation process to Human Resources Management had not progressed beyond the consultation stages in the Public Sector. Even to date, Human Resources Information System such as the one adopted by the Ministry of Health and Child Care is still facing challenges and the developer, HITRAC, is still playing a significant consultation role as the system is yet to produce the best results. In that regard, the TAM as proposed by Davis (1985) is a key guide to the authorities for them to try and ensure technological acceptance is instilled in users. With several government institutions still relying on paper-intensive, cumbersome, and laborious Human Resources systems, the introduction of e-HRM has been hampered by technological resistance as most employees in Human Resources departments have challenges in operating computers. As such, perceived ease of use must be changed positively for system users. Where positivity is achieved in equipping Human Resources practitioners with the technological skills and knowledge, automatically, perceived usefulness is fulfilled. Davis (1985)

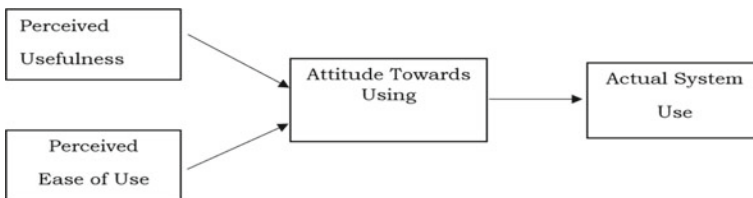


Fig. 5.1 Technology acceptance model as proposed by Fred Davis (1986)

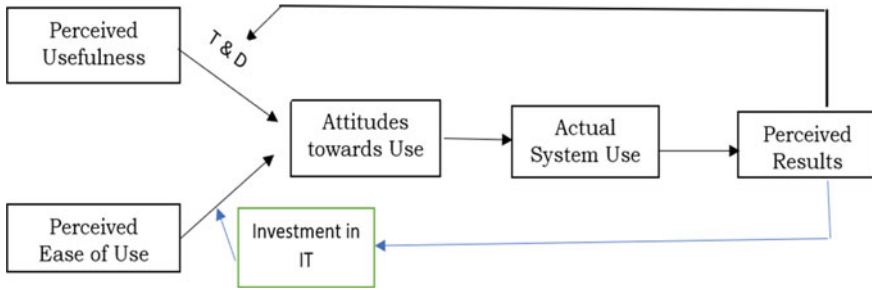


Fig. 5.2 Contextual implementation of the TAM from the researchers' idea

observes that once perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are realized, attitudes towards using technology are achieved. In turn, the TAM argues that a positive attitude towards the use of technology will ensure that actual system use is inevitable.

The government of Zimbabwe, through its relevant Ministries, should invest significantly in the procurement of computers and enhancement of infrastructure for ICT purposes. Training and development programmes must be prioritized to equip system users on the use and benefits of using technology for effective management of Human Resources systems and processes. Bell, Lee and Yeung (2006) alluded those investments in technology are aimed at bringing about efficiency in operational tasks. Once investments in technology and training and development programmes are implemented, positive attitudes towards system uses are imminent such that Human Resources practitioners and other users can use the system.

The model can be implemented in the following context from the researchers' point of view (Fig. 5.2).

The above illustration shows how the public sector of Zimbabwe can use the model from the launching phase to the implementation and evaluation stages. In the above illustration, it will be important for the public service to introduce training and development programmes aimed at moulding positive attitudes towards acceptance and use of technology in the management of HR systems and processes. Training and development are also keys where needs analysis has been done through assessment of the achieved or perceived results. In the same vein, investments in information communication technology are important. Where perceived results fall short due to lack of investment in hardware and infrastructure, the authorities can be guided accordingly.

The Theory of Reasoned Action

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) observes that actual behaviour is easily determined by his/her prior intentions alongside his/her beliefs (Davis, 1985). Behavioral intention is thus the person's motive before an actual presentation or manifestation of the

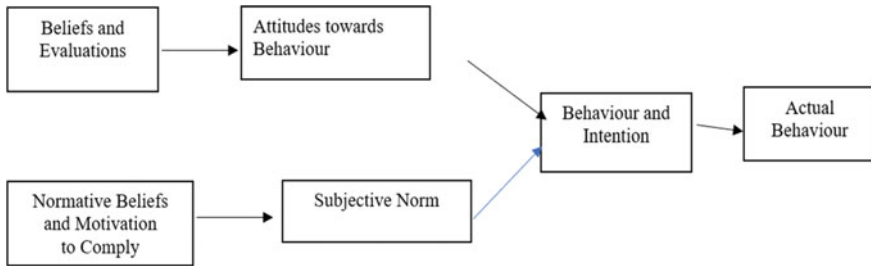


Fig. 5.3 Theory of research action by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989)

actual behaviour (Fig. 5.3). Behavioural intention is thus a measure of one's intention to the performance of a behaviour. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), behavioural intention can be a direct determination of a person's attitude towards behaviours and the subjective norm associated with the behaviour in question. Attitudes towards actual behaviour were defined as a person's positive or negative feelings towards the performance of certain behaviour. The subjective norm, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), is the person's perception that close ties, i.e. people around that person, think that, that person should or should not perform the behaviour. In 1989, Davies adopted this theory to develop the TAM. Davis, however, incorporated changes into the Theory of Researched Action Model. Davis forewent subjective norms and considered the attitude of a person towards a proven behaviour in his TAM. Davis (1989) further sidelined individual salient beliefs to determine attitude toward a given behaviour. He, instead, was influenced by several of his research studies to believe that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of technology was enough to predict the attitudes of a user towards the use of a system.

The theory of Researched Action is more complex as it was modified from the TAM. It encompasses both individual and group factors that determine attitudes towards behaviour and thus requires a system that has already been rolled out and under the evaluation stages to either maintain or strengthen the system. Besides it being encompassing in terms of personal beliefs and normative beliefs and motivation to comply, the subjective norm is highly likely to discourage the intended goal. In the context of the Zimbabwe Public Sector, that is at its perceived initial stages, Human Resources Information System requires investment for acceptance first before further advancements can be introduced.

Results and Discussion

The government of Zimbabwe has since incorporated internet resources into traditional human resources management practices. It possesses a Wide Area of Network and application systems such as SAP software, civil service payroll, national registration system and pensions processing (Zinyama & Nhema, 2016: 18). In 2005,

the Civil Service Commission computerised the Human Resources Information Management System (HRIMS) with the aim of facilitating appropriate staffing levels, career planning, promotion, staff appraisal and disciplinary action, incentives and time management” (Chimhowu et al., 2010: 112). Digitalising the human resources systems have been expected to have significant improvements in Zimbabwe’s public service. This is because for the state to deliver its potentials, it must establish and sustain a functional Public Service (Adekunle, 2018: 63).

Disturbingly, it seems there are still bottlenecks in the system. There is an absence of proper digital HR platforms to support processes of personnel record keeping, hiring, retaining, and training of the workforce and the public sector continues to rely on inefficient, paper-intensive HR systems. Unexpected bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies are still experienced in responding to public service queries and demands (Zinyama & Nhema, 2016). Employees’ productivity and performance management are still based on traditional practices (Bernard Nkala et al., 2021) ignoring the benefits of digital technology that could help improve turnaround times and instil a strong public service performance culture. A complete change from traditional human resources practices to digital and technology-based systems is a long-overdue fundamental change.

Digitalisation in the Public Sector

The government, through the Public Service Commission’s Paymaster, Salary Services Bureau, has managed to run a fully-fledged digitalised HR system to input, store, and maintain HR information for government employees. The SSB’s system, regardless of being digitalised, relies on paper-intensive sources of data. The SSB e-HRM system manages appointments, leave, remuneration, and terminations. However, hiccups are still being experienced are grossly attributed to the bureaucracies involved in the movement of paperwork from the originating ministries to the SSB. Mostly the chapterwork is lost, misplaced, and damaged hence the need for a sound digitalisation process to eliminate the above problems.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare adopted the use of HRIS in 2002 as a way of enhancing HR processes through a web-based platform. In this system, Provincial and District Offices submit their paperwork to their Head Office. The Head Office, due to the centralization of the system in the Ministry, will do the capturing and processing of all the submitted data from the country’s ten provinces. However, the lack of investment in technology, and the centralization of the virtual HR platform at the Ministry’s Head Office, is not a favourable situation for the development of processes and procedures of HR systems. Decisions can be delayed due to information loss and distortion.

The Ministry of Health and Child Care is also one Ministry that adopted the HRIS, a web-based HR system developed by HITRAC, and launched in 2008. This system was designed to capture all data for the health sector in Zimbabwe. Significant strides have been made towards investment in technology for the Ministry of

Health's HRIS. Provinces, Districts and Central Hospitals are all connected to the system, with the main server at the Ministry of Health and Child Care Head Office. Every HR practitioner within the Ministry of Health and Child Care is provided with login credentials for the system so that they can access the system at any time for the purposes of inputting and updating HR data. The Ministry has to date successfully decentralized its HRIS to all Provincial and District Offices around Zimbabwe. However, regardless of the efforts to provide hardware and software to ensure the system is running, investment in infrastructure for efficient internet connectivity has been the major drawback of the system. Furthermore, the system only accounts for the numbers of employees and general transactional operations. The system does not provide for payroll processing, that has been the sole responsibility of the SSB. The lack of investment in the web-based HRIS has derailed proper accountability of numbers such that authorities still rely on paper-based submissions from Provincial and Central Hospitals.

Being amongst the developing nations Zimbabwe is one of the countries in which the government (Public Sector) had lagged in terms of technological integration of Human Resources Management Systems. In Zimbabwe, the Public Service Commission is the employer. All line ministries in the government of Zimbabwe fall under the Public Service Commission as the recruitment, selection, and placement and separation procedures are guided by Public Service Commission regulations. As such, the Public Service Commission handles bulky Human Resources issues at the National level. The PSC is an arm of the Executive, established in terms of Sect. 202 of the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Section 203 provides for the functions of the Commission including the appointment of qualified and competent persons to hold posts in the public service, exercise disciplinary powers, investigate and remedy grievances of members of the public service (PSC Website, 2021).

The pre- and post-independent Human Resources Management Systems Zimbabwe have seen slow movement in terms of technological developments in the Human Resources Management arena in the Public Service. It was in the late 80's that the Public Service Commission sought to introduce digital systems of managing Human Resources Management in the public sector through landing the digital platform named the Zimbabwe Human Resources Information Systems project. The project was originated by the Public Service Commission in a bid to "Digitalise" its personnel records. The advent of the Human Resources Information Systems Pilot project in 1989 by the Public Service Commission was meant to reduce paperwork between various stakeholders that required personnel records within the Public Service Commission system. The 1989 Public Service Commission Human Resources Information System pilot project was mainly centred on capturing biographical data, academic data, and working history for employees.

A further review was done as the benefits of the system were being noticed. In that regard, the automatics were embracing digitalisation in Human Resources Management by coming out redesigning the Human Resources tasks and integrating them with Information and Communication Technology. Canton and Mangia (2019; 58–59) reiterated that digitalisation requires redesigning the role of Human Resources and developing new competencies that will assist to ensure employee well-being

and organisational sustainability in the digital era. It can be assumed therefore that the government of Zimbabwe through the Public Service Commission saw it necessary to integrate Human Resources System and Information Communication Technology (digitalisation) for effective and efficient Human Resources Management in the Public Sector. Britto Chimbunde (2001) observes that the PSC, in 1996, reviewed its HRIS terms of reference reflecting a subtle shift in objectives and rationale for the HRIS. This was considered to reduce the problems posed by the manual personnel procedures that were being used that period that include but were not limited to delays in obtaining relevant information, outdated information, inaccurate information, documents and files going missing, storage expenses for files and lack of direct information kept by the SSB (Salary Services Bureau), the paymaster of the Public Service. The valuable assumption in the government's vision was to replace the problematic manual system with the digitalised/ computerized system. However, the HRIS project in Zimbabwe was moving at a snail pace. Despite the 1989 pilot project and the 1996 review, the digitalisation process of HRM had not progressed beyond the consultation stages. Given the absence of concrete results on the attempted digitalisation of HR in the Public Service, line ministries such as the Ministry of Health, took initiatives to develop their e-HRM support systems. Such initiatives are a clear indication of the PSC's failure to create and invest in digital technology to effectively manage its HR processes and systems. This failure to invest in digital technology attributed to heavy reliance on partner support {to allow for transition} derailed the whole project. Lawler and Mohrman (2003) in Bell, Lee and Young (2006) explained that investments in technology are aimed at bringing about efficiency in operational tasks. The slow transition in the digitalisation process reflects poor policy frameworks, coupled with a lack of strong investment cases by the government has kept HR systems and processes on the lag to date. A study by Mervis Chiware & Shikha (2021) stated that Zimbabwean institutions, the public service included, are failing to adopt appropriate practices in human resources management because employees lack technical expertise, skills, poor financial budget towards technological development and acquisition and organisational management support.

In a study by Britto Chimbunde (2001) the Public Service Commission relies principally on manual systems to maintain information about employees. These manual records, inclusive of appointment forms, leave records, manpower development information, and other employee data are generated manually, and paper files are created and stored as employee records in Registry Departments. This has been the practice to date in all line Ministries. All government departments run Registry Departments that serve as sources of information for any reference for HR purposes at all levels within the bureaucratic organisational structures of the government. This means a single employee that has at least 3 up to a maximum of 5 files containing the same information for example in the Ministry of Health, a general hand at a clinic will have a file at their parent station, the district offices, Provincial offices, Head Office and the Salary Services Bureau (PSC Paymaster). This presents a high risk to the management of employees' information, especially where HR systems are not digitalised.

In a bid to account for the numbers of employees within the public service, the PSC in the year 2000 embarked on a nationwide headcount for all employees. This was also a move aimed towards eliminating ghost workers in the system whose existence was attributed to the inefficient HR reporting system on terminations. If in practice, the system was well digitalised, the financial resources invested into the headcount exercise would have been channelled towards enhancing HR systems to improve efficiency.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study was designed to examine the digitalisation of HR systems as a necessity for effective public sector HRM in Zimbabwe. Predominantly, it sought to investigate the effects of digitisation, investigating how it will transform the role of the civil servants and the nature of HRM practices in Zimbabwe. One of the significant findings to emerge from this study is that the PSC hold monopoly over public human resources management at the national level and the PSC all centrally governs the HRM systems of all line ministries in the government of Zimbabwe. Consequently, the recruitment, selection, and placement and separation procedures are guided by the Public Service Commission regulations. Furthermore, the results of this investigation show that there is resounding evidence that the commission has managed to run a fully-fledged digitalised HR system to input, store, and maintain HR information for government employees. Desk research has confirmed the importance of adopting technology (digitalisation) in all operational tasks with more emphasis being placed on digital Human Resources Management. Based on the reviewed literature, the chapter concludes that the digitalisation of human resources systems and processes in Zimbabwe has a huge potential to transform the public sector. Therefore, a strong case towards digitalisation exists.

However, despite these accomplishments, the study has found that generally human Resources Management Systems in Zimbabwe have seen slow movement in terms of technological developments in the Human Resources Management arena in the Public Service. Worryingly, the PSC still relies principally on manual systems to maintain information about employees. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that most digitalisation processes to Human Resources Management have not progressed beyond the consultation stages in the public sector. Nevertheless, this chapter does not conclude that no other factors and theories can further be explored to address the subject. Exploration of more literature by other researchers can present more arguments that can be put forward and add to the body of knowledge. The chapter recommends that the public sector strongly invests in automation and digital HR technologies including building adequate capacities to support e-HR systems. Lastly, evidence from this study suggests institutional improvements and capacity building. Policy review of existing regulatory frameworks is a necessity this enables the creation of technology responsive procedures and processes supporting

business in the twenty-first century way. Hence, the writers suggest that this digitalisation of public HRM systems and processes must be sustained to cement the strategic human resources management systems for future economic development in Zimbabwe.

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Chapter 6

Developing Priority-Driven Leadership and Supervisory Skills Within Public Sector Low Resource Settings



Aaram Gwiza, Promise Machingo Hlungwani, Brighton Nyagadza, Victoria David, Gideon Masaruse, and Charles Massimo

Abstract This chapter examines the experiences of developing priority- leadership and supervisory skills within public sector low resources settings. Priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills are globally acknowledged as a panacea in creating a vibrant and agile human capital that can operate in existing low resource set-ups. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, a case study approach was utilised as the research design. This enabled a systematic review of all relevant data from selected government institutions, the internet and publications using the case of Zimbabwe. Data were analysed using the content analysis method. Research findings confirmed a depressing experience underpinned by a low uptake of developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills in Zimbabwe. The above scenario makes it difficult for the government to continue providing quality and adequate goods and services to the public. Experiences of economic instability, uncompetitive compensation packages leading to brain drain, resistance to change, limited or no qualified IT professionals emerged as some of the key stumbling blocks for full adoption of this new initiative. The study recommended the imperative need to improve the economic landscape of Zimbabwe to unlock all avenues aimed at improving the welfare of public leaders. Equally, sensitisation on leadership change and innovation in the public sector remains a top priority.

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Keywords Priority-driven leadership · Supervisory skills · New public governance

Introduction and Background

Sound Human Resources Management (HRM) remains a necessity for the success of every public organisation. The discipline has undergone serious dramaturgical transformations to meet the new demands of the twenty-first century. There is, indeed, a marked change in HRM functions from merely dealing with personal matters to essentially developing strategic operationalisation of convoluted plans and policies of the organisation. To date, there are ongoing scholarly debates about the major issues associated with HRM in the future (Nasir, 2017: 217). In effect, HR managers are confronting a myriad of problems because of increased globalisation, the latest production techniques, change in customers' demands and corporate restructuring, to name but a few (Nasir, 2017: 217). Further disturbingly, HR managers face an uphill task to attract and retain competent and skilled human capital, realising the diverse needs and demands of employees from a multi-cultural perspective, and, equally important, economizing of employees (Nasir, 2017: 217). Unfolding scenarios seem to suggest a compelling case for HR managers in the public sphere to develop an agile workforce that can meet the new and ever-dynamic calls of the new millennium. Developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills remains a shared challenge amongst all contemporary government institutions to continue serving the public in an economic, efficient and effective manner.

Extant management literature points to the fact that the twenty-first century HRM paradigm is fundamentally to utilise the knowledge and the expertise of employees in an efficient, economic and effective manner. This is highly important for the accomplishment of set organisational targets. Equivalently, buttress the imperative for the HR managers to prioritise employees' benefits and other work-related issues because employees serve as a central linchpin for the success of any organisation (Nasir, 2017: 217). Contemporary public sector entities are increasingly deeply entrenched in serious challenges of a transformative environment that anticipate them to unearth current changes and, accordingly, devise counter-strategies aimed at enhancing service optimization (Robbin, 2005; Nasir, 2017: 217). In the contemporary period, the public sector is facing diverse problems associated with twenty-first-century human resource management. These include but are not limited to harnessing new technology, globalisation, ever-changing innovations, political and inevitable economic pressures; and ethical and ecological problems (Theunissen, 2007). Further worryingly, change management remains one of the most critical issues in this modern era (Nasir, 2017: 217). The pre-requisite for the survival and growth of any contemporary public sector is to go hand in hand with internal and external changes. Therefore, respecting other equally critical business units of an organisation, the HR manager has an unequivocal mandate to lead in maintaining the anticipated pace (Ulrich, 1997).

Over the past decades, concerted efforts have been made by many countries in an endeavour to improve employees' performance in the public sector. One of such commitments has been the reformation of HR functions to improve performance in the context of a harsh economic environment. Such interventions sought to realign HR operations in the government institutions and departments in line with the new demands of the twenty-first century, including but not limited to technology advancement, peoples' values and perceptions and budgetary calls. All these developments are, in essence, a compelling case for governments to reconfigure their leadership skills and competencies within government ministries and departments to improve employee performance in a globally ever dynamic and innovative public sector environment characterised by technology advancement, shifting demographic preferences and shrinking fiscal space., among them. These factors, directly and indirectly, determine human resource management strategies and the possibility of their implementation (Stankiewicz, 2015: 7). In effect, appropriate leadership qualities are equally imperative in producing fit-for-purpose public personnel in the twenty-first-century.

Leadership innovation and change is critical and lay a foundation for HR personnel to remain aloft, remain effective, economic, and efficient in discharging their mandates. In support of the above, Yahiaoui et al. (2015: 3), posit that the goals of an organisation cannot be accomplished unless accompanied by new views on leadership. Accordingly, new leaders are expected to broaden the responsibilities of all organisational members by investing in employee development, so that people acquire strategically and change expertise that is necessary to drive all critical HR roles of the organisation (Yahiaoui et al., 2015: 3).

Although the research on public sector leadership is substantial and has had a significant impact, it does not always attend to people management, and it is at times also "rose-tinted" in that it does not always address common weaknesses of public sector leadership, such as a tolerance of mediocrity and poor people management (De Waal, 2010). Previous research overlooked the critical role of public leadership that assist civil service to grow and develop in their jobs to better articulate diverse emerging HRM complexities (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 275; Kulla et al., 2017: 527; Nasir, 2017: 217) coin that civil servants are the souls of a country where the concept of good corporate governance is reflected in the performance of civil servants itself. Optimal performance can only be realized if there are no disruptions in the form of human resource issues such as competence, job placement, organisational culture and leadership and payroll mechanisms that generally occur in public sector organisations (Kulla et al., 2017: 527). It is against this background that this chapter seeks to fill this knowledge gap by establishing strategies of developing appropriate leadership that can utilise human capital for effective public service delivery in public sector low resource settings.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This section reviews relevant literature and briefly discusses the main theory guiding this study. Leadership has the key term in this study is also conceptualised.

Conceptual Orientation

Leadership in the Public Sector

There is no one-size-fits-all definition of leadership in management literature. Several people confirm knowing and seeing the concept's application. Correspondingly, Kolzow laments that "...I can't describe leadership, but I know it when I see it." Extant definitions of leadership do not explain leadership; they at best merely convey the essence of leadership from a particular point of view. Particularly in an organisation setting, the concept of leadership is normally applied, referring to the executive director, president, and/or Board members. Notwithstanding, a leader is more than someone who is a widely recognized individual or who possesses organisational authority.

Sorenson and Epps offer a more comprehensive definition of a leader, whose key attributes assist in fully understanding pertinent issues in this particular study. To them, a leader is, a forceful and dynamic personality who leads from the front; an architect and implementer of strategy; a mediator in conflict situations; an integrator who assures the climate of the organisation; a person able to motivate subordinates and who, by persuasion, compulsion, or example to others; succeeds in getting others to follow the leader's wishes). A relatively precise definition is that, leaders are just ordinary people with extraordinary determination. The above definitions resonate with the suggestion by Kanter cited in Kolzow that leadership is "the art of mastering change... the ability to mobilise others' efforts in new directions".

Whilst it is often taxing to precisely define leadership, it is imperative to have a grant appreciation of what it entails if any person is eager to acquire knowledge regarding generally acceptable traits, skills and competencies for a more effective leader that suits the new HRM demands of the twenty-first-century. This should also take us to another level of defining public leadership as it applies in this study.

Van Wart defines public sector leadership as the process of (1) providing the results required by authorized processes in an efficient, effective, and legal manner, (2) developing and supporting followers who provide those results, and (3) aligning the organisation with its environment (Orazi et al., 2013: 490). Although other authors have more recently tried to provide their definitions (see e.g. Robbins & Coulter, 2007), Van Wart's definition has served as a 'category anchor' definition (Orazi et al., 2013: 490). Taking for granted that public sector leadership exists (according to Fairholm, 2006, one can only know it when one sees it), public administration

scholars and practitioners have recently tried to demarcate the public leadership domain more clearly (Wallis & McLoughlin, 2007; Orazi et al., 2013: 490).

Contextually, this chapter would suggest that priority leadership and supervisory skills entail a stock of all key professional, skills and competencies that are unique, fit-for-purpose to drive all HR functions more effectively, economically and efficiently to counter threats emanating from the technological revolution, globalisation, changing clientele values and preferences, political pressures and unstable economic environment, among them. Leadership competency in the twenty-first century should focus more on cultivating and encouraging the attainment of survival skills, that enable leaders to adapt to any situation and remain flexible (Zondo, 2001: 240). These skills are of a technical, human, and conceptual nature and derive from the fundamental generic skills that go with management ability. The effective leadership and supervisory characteristics should mean the capacity for public managers to fully utilise civil servants as a critical resource in enhancing the organisation's overall goal achievement. That is the realisation of pre-set goals that impact the institution positively evidently calls for effective leadership that attracts employees to follow orders and prepare themselves to work as a team. Bradley cited in Kolzow buttresses that:

...the test of an effective leader lies in the reaction and response of his followers. He should not have to impose authority. Bossiness in itself never made a leader. He must make his influence felt by example and the instilling of confidence in his followers. The greatness of a leader is measured by the achievements of the leader. This is the ultimate test of his effectiveness.

Public Administration (PA) studies increasingly recognise the importance of leadership, and the need to move towards more adaptive approaches is well recognised (Hsieh & Liou, 2016; Zeier et al., 2018). For example, Tummers and Knies (2016), highlighted the fundamental role of support for employees in addressing contemporary public sector issues of accountability, rule-following, political loyalty and network governance (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 275). Network governance entails the need to engage in coalition building to expedite and obtain cost savings (Zondo, 2001: 240). These collaborations will be at departmental and ministerial or, at times, external organisational levels. Strategic collaborations are widely perceived as a cornerstone for multi-skilling and networking (Charan, 1991).

Theoretical Framework:

Over the past decades, several attempts have been made to appreciate leadership as a concept and a distinct field of study. Concerted efforts are widely acknowledged and are visibly piling in an endeavour to develop a precise model or theory that serves as the basis for understanding the fundamentals of the art of effective leadership. Even though this is not the fulcrum of this chapter to unpack those concerted efforts, it is prudent to present the leadership theory/model guiding this study so that the reader will have a better appreciation of this important discussion. In essence, leadership

theory or model comprise coherent ideas or views that explains how to lead effectively and/or what constitutes a better leader.

Contingency Theory of Situational Leadership Theory

Contingency theory provides a flexible leadership toolkit, suggesting that the ideal leadership conditions in one situation may not necessarily apply in another. The theory provides explanations on why a leader who is very successful in one situation may fail when in another new situation or when the situation changes. Whilst the origin of the contingency theory is claimed by many in management literature, this chapter adopts one originally coined by Hersey and Blanchard in 1982. These famous researchers came up with what they called ‘situational leadership theory. In essence, the situational leadership theory underlines “styles” of leadership that align with the task-versus-people orientation. Precisely, the situational leadership theory presupposes that the leader’s behaviour largely depends on a particular situation and, equally, on the followers.

By implication, an effective leader should create a culture that naturally drives his/her to respect and follow him/her. The same anticipated leadership culture should serve as a motivation for the followers to have a zeal to achieve a specific assignment. Therefore, key issues: acceptance and readiness are of critical concern in this regard. As argued by Hersey and Blanchard (1982), the motivation, and the abilities of different leaders, will, inevitably, affect their decisions in a given circumstance. They categorise effective leaders into four styles of leadership inter-alia: delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing.

This theory is apt for this study largely because it provides a theoretical justification for creating a more pragmatic leadership culture that is flexible enough to adapt to new HRM demands and complexities of the new millennium. In the context of a globally deepening financial crisis, agile leaders are recommended to devise survival HRM strategies that guarantee high-quality service provision to the general public. Equally, the contingency theory is also acknowledged due to its unique philosophical basis in treating employees as an equally important asset that enhances the growth and sustainability of the organisation. The Contingency theory is more pronounced in the new public management paradigm that calls for restoration of efficiency, effectiveness, and efficiency in the public sector through the adoption of the private sector management values and principles. Specifically, one of the NPM’s prime goals was the adoption of performance management within public institutions.

HRM Functions and the Priority-Driven Leadership and Supervisory Skills in the Public Sector

HRM refers to all the practices, systems and procedures implemented to attract, acquire, develop and manage human resources to achieve the goals of an organisation. Human Resource Accounting theory emphasises that human resources are assets for any organisation. In the contemporary era, HRM is a very useful tool in achieving the organisation's competitive advantage. Strong emphasis is also given by Yahiaoui et al. (2015) that effective management of human resources is essential for the efficiency of the Public Service. The general impression from these definitions is the imperative that constant environmental scanning is always important to ensure that HR meet the demands and concerns of the prevailing environment, politically, socially, economically, and technologically. Successful leaders continually challenge the status quo by scanning the environment and can operate in uncertainty but still achieving results (Jensen cited in Zondo, 2001: 240).

The Civil Service is critically dependent on developing new skills, changing engrained behaviours and managing the uncertainty and conflict that can arise as a result (Yahiaoui et al., 2015: 9). If HRM is remotely considered in this process of addressing the global HRM issues, then Civil Service reform efforts are, in essence, moribund. Quite regrettable, HRM in the government sector continue to be viewed by successive governments as a cost to be managed, or a way of making redundancies (Yahiaoui et al., 2015: 9). Frantic efforts by previous regimes in coming up with a step-change in the quality of public service delivery have dismally failed. Therefore, contemporary public organisations cannot be seen making similar blunders." Indeed, public sector organisations must:

- promote more effective collaboration, with each other and with the voluntary and private sectors, to prevent overlapping and duplicated services and to be more cost-effective,
- identify more efficient ways of working and foster innovation,
- identify potential costs savings by means of greater use of shared services and outsourcing,
- be more effective, focusing on achieving the new changing needs of the public through enhanced front-line autonomy,
- negotiate new/local terms and conditions of employment, and
- manage and communicate change effectively, involving employees through effective consultation to ensure employee/union buy-in (Yahiaoui et al., 2015:9).

Further, Ogojiwa (2021) postulates that the global drastic changes taking places such as technological advancement, the global novel COVID 19 pandemic, climate change and economic upheavals, have all compelled organisations, particularly public entities, to transform their management systems and practices to meet the growing unique demands for accountability and effectiveness. With new technologies presenting unprecedented complexities for individuals and public organisations, there is an

urgent need for public management and leadership to adapt to change in this twenty-first century, to ensure public order. Thus, ensuring effective change, Yahiaoui et al. (2015) posit that HRM should be at the heart of Public Sector Reform (PSR) so that key people management issues are addressed.

Similar concerns are also expressed by von Dran that the diverse and dynamic society has resulted in the demand for renewed leadership skills and competencies to revamp service provision in the public sector. Based on the previous research, successful leaders should possess traits such as ambition and energy, the desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, job-related knowledge and self-monitoring. Whilst there is a great need for public organisations to implement change, implementation of change in the public sector remains a challenge due to red tape and low reliance on the transformational leadership style. Financial cutbacks and austerity measures are among some of the factors that have prompted public organisations to change. For this reason, the transformational leadership style is ideal due to its unique potential of promoting employee participation in change implementation. One can, therefore, deduce that combined efforts in developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory capacity skills in low public sector resource settings remain a top priority.

Ulrich (1998) highlights the urgent call for HRM' departure from the status quo, to be an agent of continuous transformation, shaping processes and organisational culture. In the era of constant change, organisations must make rapid decisions and have the agility to find new ways of doing business. In the public sector, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Line Managers (LM) play a critical role in the transformation of HR as its activities are expected to increase shareholder value. Holbeche (2009) takes the argument further that the fundamental HR role is evolving and has swiftly become a core business leadership role that seeks to ensure that the organisation is equipped for success. As such, public leaders should regard HRM as an important aspect of corporate governance and promote dialogue between the employer and employees to achieve public sector productivity.

Strategic Leadership and Human Resources Management

Belias and Koustelios (2014) assert that strategic leadership should be transformational and to achieve organisational goals, leaders must have a unique vision, a clear understanding of their organisation's strategic objectives and take the necessary action to achieve their objectives. Morican shared a common view, stating that leaders must establish, reiterate, and reinforce the organisation's strategy and how their teams will contribute towards achieving the objectives. Leaders need to consult employees for 'buy in' to new ways of working with HR recommending organisational development strategies that support the transformation of public services.

The twenty-first century is the century of the HR revolution, hence, the need to give it special attention and recognize its significance in all government activities. In recent times, most governments have begun to rethink the fundamental role that the

human factor plays in creating and sustaining the organisation's vision and goals. Public organisation leaders are expected to manage intellectual capital strategically as it is the major source of competitive advantage in any organisation. These vital assets augment and expedite the organisation's efforts to achieve an overall strategic fit and sustained competitive advantage.

The current pandemic, COVID 19, appears to be an ultimate test for the global call for new leadership arrangements across the world. Some government leaders have risen to the occasion, but others are struggling to manage this crisis. In this time of crisis, organisational leaders are relying on their instincts and insight provided by human resources professionals to support both, the organisation, and employees.

Leadership and Talent Acquisition/Recruitment and Selection

Talent acquisition or staffing is an equally critical HR function as alluded to by Yahiaoui et al. (2015). They assert that recruitment and selection should build up a diverse pool of personal capabilities that will in future, satisfy changing needs. In support of the above observation, Hlbeche argues that: *“Our people are our greatest asset” is a reality as the value of intellectual capital has become more apparent.* Having the right talent has become very important as talent generates value in the form of profit or other forms of benefit. Human capital can be viewed as the organisation's intangible assets that contribute to its success through its competencies that include skills, education, experience, potential and capacity. HR Department should provide the organisation with the right people for the right job, at the right place by recruiting people with the required skill sets, good communication skills and experience. The public sector is not spared, because the sector is under pressure to become innovative, effective, and efficient, whilst reducing expenditure and providing exceptional services.

As such, the strategic leadership should have a thorough understanding of the labour market to inform hiring decisions and also reduce competitive pressure by being uniquely attractive to key talent (Holbeche, 2009). People as human assets are the “glue” that holds all the other assets, such as financial and physical ones, together and guides their use to better achieve results (Mathis and Jackson cited in Kulla et al., 2017: 524).

Research Methodology

Descriptive and explorative research on human resources in the public sector was followed. The study used qualitative research data that was elicited from document analysis of print and electronic media. Desk reviews of statutory instruments and

proclamations were also analysed. Document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. The researchers made use of various documents from the public sphere to gain important information on how managing human resources in the Zimbabwe public sphere could be improved. Corroborating findings across data sets in this study enhanced the efficacy of the study by reducing potential bias that is likely to be brought using a single narrative. This approach is in sync with the tenets of data triangulation that advances the argument that research needs to reflect a diversity of voices rather than present a biased perspective. In this study, documents enabled the researchers to understand public sector human resources background information. This also enabled the recovery of historical insight, something that is well documented in available government records. Such information helped researchers to unpack the trajectory of public sector human resources tendencies in the country, and as such enabled a thorough analysis informed by what transpired, what was obtained on the ground and giving the projections for the future status of the civil service. The fact that documents are readily available in hard and soft copy formats means that this data collection tool is handy, and the analysis is thrift and swift. It is also clear that documents are almost always readily available on how human resources are managed in an organisation in general and for government workers. Thus, for this study, relevant data was simply selected from repositories that already existed rather than collected.

The other advantage noted is that documents are on human resources management in Zimbabwe give information that is 'unobtrusive' and therefore are not directly affected by the process of data collection where researchers may temper with or alter respondents' information. Indeed, the inclusion of exact names and specific references makes documents a critical source of research data. Whilst the use of documents in a study like this is prudent, caution should be taken in the fact that not all critical documents can be readily available. Some documents may be classified, and accessibility might be blocked, especially with the official secrecy act in Zimbabwe. The fact that information may be proscribed also hinders the credibility of the data that is collected. Documents should not be treated as necessarily precise, accurate, or complete recordings of events that have occurred. Researchers should not simply 'lift' words and passages from available documents to be thrown into their research report. Rather, they should establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues being explored". With this observation, it was critical for this study that researchers look at the authenticity, credibility, accuracy, and representativeness of the human resources documents that were selected for this particular study. Data were analysed using the thematic approach where emerging issues were grouped in a way to ensure that they are discussed simultaneously. This type of analysis foregrounds recognition of patterns within data, coding them and constructing categories that speak to human resources management in Zimbabwe's public sector. The rationale behind this was to ensure that the findings are an objective reflection of the obtaining experiences of the civil service in the country.

Results and Discussion

The Zimbabwean public service delivery has been under scrutiny and dominated headlines with the public complaining of embezzlement of funds, moonlighting, underhand dealings and corruption that have all weakened the efficiency of the government (Mavhiki et al., 2013: 135). Such complaints compelled the government to rethink better ways of revamping the public sector performance. As existing management literature attests, ZIMPREST and Performance Management signal part of the government's considerable strides to restore accountability among other core values in the public sector. However, a cursory review of these policy interventions points to the fact that such initiatives did not bear fruits as anticipated. In effect, the quality of public goods and service delivery continue to record a downward trend. The Zimbabwe public service is left with no option, other than to adopt innovative strategies and attitudes to cope with the demands on the system and its employees. These have included encouraging improvisation, learning by doing and making a deliberate effort to acquire survival skills. Furthermore, lessons learned from managers and leaders in the private sector have ushered in a new sense of confidence in the execution of change programmes (Zondo, 2001: 239).

Despite the afore-given strides to improve the Civil Service, there are notable gaps in urgent need of attention. All these HRM challenges raise fundamental questions reading the quality of public leadership capacity. Critics have argued that government employees are largely too slow in serving clients and this resulted in long queues and over-crowding, they are arrogant, uncaring and insensitive, they practice favouritism in attending to clients, are lazy, they spend too much time doing their own private business, or they are unnecessarily absent from their workstations (Zinyama et al., 2015). This is even though statutory instruments that forbid such behaviour are provided in black and white. There was a need for a complete overhaul of the management and leadership systems that will give the overall directions in all HRM reforms to suit the new realities of the twenty-first century. In particular, the Result Based Management (RBM) system was widely viewed seen as a long-term solution to resolve issues of transparency and accountability within government ministries, departments and agencies.

Empirical evidence on the RBM in Zimbabwe's public sector has been noted with mixed feelings. The study gathered that the RBM system was faced with massive resistance, especially by employees, at lower organisational levels. Massive resistance has been largely fuelled by the system's complexity in terms of conceptualisation and operationalisation. Additionally, the mere fact that RBM is a purely borrowed concept from developed nations, the public service, including the leadership and management teams in the government sector were not comfortable in terms of the implications on their dominant HRM culture (Mavhiki et al., 2013: 136). In the education sector, for instance, teachers dismissed the concept as a foreign initiative that was chiefly worsening poverty amongst them. They equated this initiative with such borrowed global policies as Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) whose ripple effects are still fresh even today. On a different note, the RBM

system was much appreciated in the government sector as an alternative way that would restore transparency, accountability and impartiality in performance measurement. Accordingly, most proponents of this concept regarded it as a panacea in improving the management systems and processes within government institutions in Zimbabwe. With a zeal to effectively utilise existing limited resources and enhancing good corporate governance that is underpinned by results and outcomes, the RBM initiative was widely perceived as a promising direction in brewing up new leadership and management qualities that would reconfigure Zimbabwe's public sector in respect of the new and growing complexities of the twenty-first century. To this end, several government members were left at crossroads on whether to adopt and embrace the new management approach or not.

Extant literature revealed that full adoption of the RBM has been grossly undermined by the lack of employees' incentives. The growing sad reality is that public servants are increasingly losing confidence in the government compensation system. The allegations against the government stem from its failure to honour its promises of improving and sustaining the good conditions of employment services. Salaries of public servants have remained below the poverty datum line, regardless of the promises of rewards promised (Mavhiki et al., 2013: 137). Information gathered points to the fact that, since the RBM implementation, the performance-related compensation has not been commiserating with the concept's key thrust: results, outputs and outcomes. Previous studies also confirm that despite the promises incentives tied to the RBM initiative, the government has perennially faced financial constraints to support the RBM adoption across the public sector. Equally, the traditional work culture has negatively compromised affected seamless buy-in of RBM in the government sector. Sustained work habits have been widely identified as affecting government concerted efforts in the RBM operationalisation in Zimbabwe's public service. The general observation is that public employees are not prepared to be accountable for their work. For instance, the issue of dislike to work itself among the workers has led to much criticism of the RBM making it difficult to transform the culture (Mavhiki et al., 2013:137).

The information sought revealed that with such habits as moonlighting, absenteeism and also spoils taking precedence overproduction, the culture of the public sector has been a great challenge to RBM as it emphasises accountability, transparency and demonstration of results (Mavhiki et al., 2013: 137). Accordingly, the Zimbabwean civil service seems to be largely ignoring the imperatives of the new system in their respective work systems and approaches. Such a sustained "the business as usual approach" to work is a necessary evil in the quest to adopt priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills in a public sector low resource setting. Available literature also indicates that the RBM training received for public leadership and civil service is not sufficient. The general observation is that, specifically for RBM, the days set for training are very few for trainees to fully grasp the concept in terms of dymisitfication and implementation. A case in point is the recent virtual training workshop on IRBM and the whole government performance Management System for state Universities conducted by the Public Service Commission through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development

(MHTEISTD). The online training workshop period was very short given that it ran from 27 to 29 July 2021. The study gathered that the workshop period could not allow participants to fully understand the new concept, yet this was important to be able to train and impart knowledge to low-level employees on how this new initiative could work to promote a culture of transparency, accountability in the government sector.

Another serious setback associated with the RBM orientation experience in the Zimbabwean government sector is the negative attitude of civil service towards the training itself. Those targeted for the workshop indicated that several training sessions conducted so far since the introduction of the RBM are as a result of the PSC forcing them to attend. In the opinion of the trainers, the training sessions could have been adequate provided that participants had positive minds and that they are prepared to attend on their own. Full adoption of the RBM system is also heavily suffering from the non-commitment of senior management in the government sector. unfolding scenarios bring to the limelight that senior leaders lack enthusiasms for the system, and these have failed to avail the key reference documents to ministries and departments in time (Mavhiki et al., 2013: 137). For example, in 2013 the RMB documents for the year 2013 planned training workshops were missing in government ministries. This was in spite of the fact that the initial part for the performance appraisal had lapsed. The above scenario is reflective of the lack of support by senior government leaders to spearhead the effective implementation of the new initiative in the public sector.

Positively, government workers in Zimbabwe widely acknowledged the RBM to operationalisation as it had resulted in public leaders getting involved in the entire process. This made effective participation of public leaders at every level, automatically making them more accountable for the results achieved. This is different from the traditional arrangement where leaders were not part of the performance appraisal process. Proponents of the RBM concur that they favour the approach simply because it allows good working relationships and team spirit because the public leaders' performance will be largely dependent on how well they also undertake their duties and responsibilities at grassroots level.

An attempt to understand why government employees seem to be underperforming as compared to their colleagues in the private sector has pointed to the inefficiency in the leadership in key senior positions. It is instructive to argue that Zimbabwe's public sector falls under the armpit of the Public Service Commission (PSC) that regulates the behaviour of the workforce through a human resource management system created by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Despite the existence of these specialised institutional frameworks to enhance the quality of civil service, there is evidence that various departments, parastatals and other quasi-government institutions such as local authorities are riddled with incompetent, corrupt and ineffective leadership (Muchadenyika, 2014). The case of Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), Premier Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS), Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), and Air Zimbabwe among other parastatals is revealing the way corrupt leadership can run down a whole institution through unsustainable salaries for top management (Zinyama et al., 2015).

This is baffling especially considering that one of the major assumptions of a democratic society is that the institutions and processes of government are designed to be answerable to the citizenry for their performance (Zinyama et al., 2015).

A reflection on the appointment of the top officials to run parastatals or government departments in Zimbabwe is neither clear nor open to the general public (Veritas, 2017). Indeed, it is observed that the process is less than credible, uncompetitive and highly monopolised by the public service commission. A clear example is a fact that most senior positions are only open to officers that are already in the system. Such a human resource management policy and practice fail to ensure retention of the best, brightest and highest performing civil servants (World Bank, 2012). In essence, the system has continued to retain mediocre and underperforming people in leadership roles who are resisting change to an extent that they have been labelled stiff-necked (Zinyama et al., 2015).

Whilst there has been some transition from the period 1980–2008 to the era of the government of national unity, it is clear that the patronage in the appointment to key positions has remained intact (Moyo, 2013). Even though the civil service audit unearthed numerous malpractices and came up with recommendations to weed out ghost workers and under-qualified staff, the ZANU PF government has resisted full implementation of the audit report and recommendations. The obtaining environment has maintained the recycled individuals in most senior positions thereby stifling any prospects to transform the civil service. What ought to be done in this scenario is establish a technocratic leadership that is apolitical. This means that individuals appointed in the civil service are skilled, capable, and perform their duties in an objective, unbiased and non-partisan manner (World Bank, 2012; Zinyama et al., 2015). They have their professional jacket to lose should they perform badly and could have impeccable reputations should they succeed. Zimbabwe has many such highly skilled citizens; the chance of finding capable individuals who are not politicians to lead key ministries is very high (Zinyama et al., 2015). Yet the gate-keeping that is highly polarised is negatively impacting the smooth implementation of sound governance.

Mediocre Leadership in Zimbabwe Public Sector: Implications

Leadership has a critical role to play in government contexts. It influences employee development and, in turn, the effective delivery of public services (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 274). Harmful leadership limits the fulfilment of both these requirements (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 274). Particularly in the Zimbabwean public sector, the study established that public sector leadership is largely top-down, autocratic and leaves little or no space for employees' participation. This makes it inherently difficult to address tensions that have been identified as harmful in public sector leadership including top-down and autocratic management styles, an inability

to resolve inherent tensions and inconsistencies. Unfolding scenarios are confirmed by (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 276) who argue that managerial focus on outputs, efficiency and adherence to rational control systems is reflected in micromanagement and a lack of learning-oriented leadership. These development harming behaviours punish mistakes, and leave little room for learning, innovation and growth. Public sector leadership studies often focus on task performance, or principles such as accountability, rather than the longer-term development of staff (Dunoon, 2002; Lipsky, 2010).

In the Zimbabwean context, some public sector leaders have proven inability to balance the tensions that naturally occur in PA work. These tensions are normally visible between responsiveness to ministers and stakeholders, and accountability to administrative standards (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 276; Vogel & Masal, 2015). Whilst several public sector leaders can manage tensions, some are incapacitated (Plimmer et al., 2019). Further, street-level public officials are incapable of coping with the diverse, complex, and sometimes competing needs and wants they confront in their work (Vinzant & Crothers, 1996). The small change management tool kit held by public managers and institutions often involves a default to red tape or restructurings (Plimmer et al., 2017; Plimmer et al., 2017). Equally, incremental improvement in people and processes, for instance, is usually missed (De Waal, 2010). This statement is tentative, as there is little research on what leadership techniques are commonly used in PA (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 276; Kuipers et al., 2014).

Cases of mediocrity prevail in several Zimbabwean public institutions, that is the epitome of poor leadership (De Waal, 2010). Mediocrity simply entails negligence of basics like role modelling and developing staff, and resolute decision making that inspires confidence and deals with poor performers, and low innovation (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 276). Mediocre organisations and their respective leaders are usually not clear concerning how they add value, have weak and fragmented performance management, and weak processes more generally (de Waal, 2010). Normally, mediocrity emanates from a set of priorities in which a particular concern for employee's welfare and development is missing, and yet managing upwards—or “pleasing” superiors—takes a top priority (Berman & West, 2003 cited in Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 277).

Priority Driven Leadership and Supervisory Skills and Performance Management

The main thrust of performance management in the government sector was to make objectives, performance, and (used) resources clear; to integrate financial and non-financial information; to integrate the policy and budget cycles; and to improve quality, accessibility, and information content of the management information (de Waal, 2010: 82). The existing budgeting system, that mainly focused on resource application, needed to be replaced by a budgeting system with an

explicit link to the objectives to be achieved, the required resources to achieve them, and the expected and realized results. All these key fundamentals entail a complete overhaul of the government's leadership roles and functions to suit the new HRM realities. The same would also entail the imperative need for public agencies and politicians to show better results faster to diminish the growing dissatisfaction among citizens with the government's performance (de Waal, 2010: 82). The growing realisation is that sound leadership is an integral element towards shaping job "meaningfulness" and, consequently, job outcomes (Tummers & Knies, 2013). Previous studies have acknowledged the paramount importance of network and distributed leadership as a precursor for arresting unfolding HRM complexity in the public sector (Brookes & Grint, 2010; Vogel & Masal, 2015). Some studies have to go far to explore the prime purpose of transformational (Valero et al., 2015), transactional, paradoxical, servant (Barbuto Jr & Wheeler, 2006; Miao et al., 2014) and other leadership constructs from the management literature (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017) (Franken & Plimmer, 2019: 275). All these standards are equally critical in this study as they provide a clear picture of how priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills work in low public sector resource settings.

The economic challenges that have bedevilled Zimbabwe in the new millennium have seen the exit of key competencies out of the country (Mungwari, 2017). Migration and retirement have resulted in high staff turnover where experienced civil servants were replaced by less experienced civil servants, while the nature of their jobs was not reviewed or transformed (Mungwari, 2017; Zinyama et al., 2015). It is in this context that less talented, but still highly bureaucratic civil service, that undertakes its functions with difficulty and with an excessive transaction cost has assumed key responsibilities in various key leadership roles (Zinyama et al., 2015). This has led to considerable discontent on the part of the population that views the civil service rather as an obstacle than a facilitator of appropriate service delivery.

From an Information Technology (IT) perspective, Zimbabwe has made significant strides to improve its leadership systems and processes. In particular, the government developed a Public Finance Management Information System (PFMIS) in 2001 that ran concurrently with the Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) to reduce instances of financial mismanagement and enhance the monitoring of the financial performance of ministries in their daily operations (Zondo, 2001: 249). The computerized financial management system was also designed to detect anomalies so that action can be taken to avoid potential incidents of fraud and systemic corruption (Zondo, 2001: 249). Despite all these developments, corruption in Zimbabwe remains a major worry. It then implies that any commitment to help the public service in arresting the rampant cases of corruption among the public workforce is worth the investment.

It is also observed that the leadership roles in the government sector ought to move in tandem with the trends in the world. Therefore, maintaining payroll, time-keeping or performance data will need to adapt to the new IT systems and methods of data collection, entry, and storage (OECD, 2021). Such reforms entail not only changes to processes but also require financial resources to develop and install human

resource management tools and train staff to transition to new systems (OECD, 2021). Zimbabwe has to embrace the tenets of the fourth industrial revolution to accomplish this mandate. This entails up-scaling and up-skilling for management and floor workers who are currently using the traditional approaches to HRM.

Amongst key challenges in Zimbabwe has been the fiscally unsustainable wage bill resulting in the freezing of positions in various government sectors. This means most sectors are operating below full capacity. The vacant posts imply that some people are doing more than they ought to do. The situation has even more damaging effects arising from mass exodus for the skilled workforce in search of greener pastures. The trend dates back from the decade beginning 2000 when the country started to experience a plummeting economic performance. Resultantly, Zondo (2001:240) argues that Zimbabwe, like most developing nations, provides a training ground for developed nations' economies. This is because year Zimbabwe records a considerable number of highly skilled manpower leaving the government sector in search of greener pastures. Even those who remain behind remain demoralised due to sustained poor conditions of service and associated coping strategies. The public service is generally de-motivated, disorganised and of limited effectiveness in carrying out their key responsibilities and responsibilities (World Bank, 2012). Resultantly, there has been a lack of effective tools to strengthen public sector management and performance.

The findings of this study give the general impression that investment in leadership and prioritisation of skills development programmes is evident within government institutions. A case in point is the rolling out of the RBM in all the various Ministries and, subsequently, the orientation programmes of this new concept towards all public leaders and managers across the government sector. In all government ministries, departments and public agencies, a series of leadership development training workshops have been conducted; all designed to impart new skills and competencies that drive their respective organisations in view of the new HRM complexities of the twenty-first century. Encouragingly, it is instructive to argue that public officials in leadership positions have also been allowed to advance their careers at Diploma, degree, masters and even doctoral levels. Some acquire such new leadership orientations through on-the-job training and job rotation.

Public leaders who are exposed to these training workshops are making a huge impact in terms of reconfiguring the strategic goals and objectives of their organisations. For example, one of the heads of sections (public leaders) employed by Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUAST) who attained their Master of Science in Strategic Management degree at Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) and Midlands State University (MSU) shared their strategic prowess in developing the MUAST's strategic plan that was set to guide the University operations from 2021–2025. Central to this strategic plan is the need for all senior official and section heads to lead the University with new and adaptive leadership skills and competencies that view employees as valuable assets that equally contributes towards the organisation's overall goal achievement.

The equally important role of government in promoting a seamless adoption of priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills and competencies is evidenced

through the refurbishment of the Msasa Training Bureau (MTB) that was officially opened by the President, Cde Emmerson Mnangagwa early this year. Indeed, the new training has been and continues to be utilised by various ministries, departments and other non-state actors for conducting their training workshops. For instance, in April 2021, MUASt held its strategic workshops that were attended by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation Science and Technology Development, MUASt Executive and Heads of Departments. Essentially, the workshop allowed the invited public leadership to deliberate and agree on the newest leadership call for the University to reconfigure its culture in line with new demands of the parent ministry's education 5.0—underpinned by teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation. All these deliberations entailed a clarion call for new and innovative priority leadership qualities that allows the University to survive in the wake of the new HRM demands of the twenty-first century.

Based on the data gathered, all frantic efforts discussed that aimed at transforming the leadership culture in the government sector have largely suffered from the dominance of an inflexible leadership style that continues to influence almost all HRM processes, systems and praxis in Zimbabwe's government sector. There is evidence of bureaucracy being the hegemonic leadership style and this compromises and pace at which the pace of adopting new forms of leadership that swiftly respond to the new HRM demands of the contemporary day. Bureaucracy has received heavy criticisms because it evokes ponderous routine, complicated that will consequently result in public frustration. The key message here is that there is an imperative need for government to move with haste in adopting more flexible and innovative leadership approaches that, at best, addresses the growing HRM complexities.

In this light, the most fundamental questions are: what is the best leadership behaviour should modern governments adopt for growth and survival? How can these new leadership styles be adopted? What will be the possible implications of these new leadership approaches in the government sector? All these questions entail a new leadership trajectory underpinned by flexibility, innovation, agility and uniqueness. This study strongly suggests the adoption of the contingency approach to leadership to re-engineer government performance in respect of a dynamic employment world. The situational/contingency approach to leadership was adequately introduced in the previous section, and its philosophical underpinnings point to the appropriateness of integrated leadership in contemporary public administration. In this case, public sector leaders should behave mainly as transformational leaders, moderately leveraging transactional relationships with their followers and heavily leveraging the importance of preserving integrity and ethics in the fulfilment of tasks (Orazi et al., 2013: 487). Thus, Integrated leaders utilise both transformational as well transactional behaviours with a strong emphasis on the clarification of anticipated outcomes, boosting subordinates' intrinsic motivation, acknowledging followers' achievements, compensating high performers, and in some cases capitalising on diverse forms of transactional engagements with followers (Morse, 2010).

Zimbabwe's public sector will benefit a lot from the application of this leadership style. There are five styles that trigger the organisation's high performance. The first three are nearly identical to those described above: (1) task-oriented leadership (i.e.

setting and communicating goals, planning, coordinating subordinates' activities, providing feedback); (2) relations-oriented leadership (i.e. treating subordinates as equals, showing concern for their well-being, appreciating their work, involving them in the decision-making process); (3) change-oriented leadership (i.e. making organisations more adaptive and responsive to the external environment, identifying the most promising strategic initiatives for the organisation, encouraging employees to search for creative solutions to problems facing the organisation). The final two types of behaviour can be seen as derivatives of other leadership traits, as they are (4) diversity-oriented leadership (i.e. taking advantage of different (Orazi et al., 2013: 494).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the major findings presented above, the study suggests the following are some of the key strategies to improve and sustain priority-driven leadership and advisory skills within the public sector low resource settings.

Strong Emphasis on Outcomes

Empirical evidence in Africa seems to suggest that the growing relevance associated with outputs is vital towards the improvement of the aptitude to learn. Continuous performance monitoring, if done using the participatory approach and also accommodating critical internal and external players, can make a huge difference to organisational learning and capacity enrichment. In Zimbabwe, notable cases of dwindling public organisations are compelling cases for public managers to acquire more adaptive skills and competencies that help them inappropriately inspire their subordinates to realise the organisation's set targets. The Public Service Commission (PSC) is under extreme pressure to retain employees such that they easily fit the new culture that is premised on the placement of more value on outcomes in work performance. The new culture underlines listening to the clientele and motivating subordinates to enjoy their work by proving them with more decision-making responsibilities that in return influence outcomes.

Improving on Rewarding and Recognition Strategies

Zimbabwe confronts a myriad of problems emanating from such factors as the worsening civil service mobility, absenteeism, mental and physical stress to mention but a few. There is an urgent need to address the high cases of systemic corruption. It is also instructive to argue that civil service compensation and recognition strategies

respond to the new environment. Synchronisation of workers' retention programme with an appropriate reward strategy, and continuous review of the two systems, is necessary. In Zimbabwe's public sector, there is the availability of diverse workable strategies, both monetary and non-monetary. The various forms of reward systems adopted for civil service have a strong bearing on whether the government will be able to retain its valued talents. However, retaining public professions remains a daunting task because of the declining economy and the narrowing revenue streams. Strengthening the performance management-based appraisal approach is the best way to go as this will expectedly speed up the process of adopting the performance management culture in all the activities of the public service. The government advanced plans for non-monetary rewards may be reconsidered for urgent implementation to cushion the monetary rewards.

Co-ownership of the Organisation's Vision

The historic era of bureaucratic leadership over the past decades has since lost its management flavour. There is an imperative need to reconfigure a tolerant, inclusive leadership culture that values employees in the organisation. Unfortunately, Weberian ideal type bureaucracy has been criticised left right and centre for its myopic philosophy that views subordinates as mere followers of directives. In Zimbabwe, the current leadership is still bureaucratically characterised by top-down communication. It evokes ponderous routine, complicated and at times resulting in public frustration. Effective twenty-first-century leaders and managers do not fit the traditional public organisation characterised by structure, rigid systems and vertical communication. Instead, the new Millennium calls for a renewed emphasis on public leaders' capability to mutually agree on a shared vision with their subordinates. Some scholars like Bennis (2000) have since argued that people expect direction, trust, optimism and a willingness to learn new things. To this end, effective leaders can create and maintain trust through displaying equivalent measures of competence, ambition and integrity. Such public leaders always prioritise agenda setting, network-building and generating collaborative relationships both internally and externally to the organisation. This has since been echoed by Boyatzis (1993) that, "leaders focus on motivating and inspiring their subordinates. The leader's new role in the face of rapid change is increasingly dynamic, interdependent and unpredictable".

Innovation, Creativity and Double-Loop Learning

The 21st Century public leadership must be re-oriented towards a culture of innovation, creativity and learning. The re-orientation works well provided that workers are encouraged to transform their work attitudes, perceptions, values and their behaviours to promote the creation of an organic form of organisation (Burns &

Stalker, 1961). Leadership development for a dynamic environment ought to focus more on ‘learning by doing because the bulk of the skills needed are largely situational. Importantly, innovation needs to be supported such that leaders can undertake initiatives as process re-configuration and cost recovery. Normally leaders who possess exceptional communication and motivation strategies utilise double-loop learning by continuously innovating and encouraging change within their respective organisations. They are well prepared to allow a subordinate to experiment, interrogate extant systems, processes and procedures. That should allow them to suggest a change. Innovatively embracing change and critiquing the status quo are fundamental qualities in the current management and control of the civil service. These new mind-sets call for innovative and technical leadership and the capacity for organisations to generate and develop their environments.

Enhancement of Organisational Networks

Public institutions are realising the fruits of developing strategic collaborations or networks either internal or external of the civil service. Such scenarios provide for the free flow and the necessary knowledge acquisition and new skills competencies. They help potential leaders to appreciate that sharing of experiences improves the capacity both at individual and organisational perspectives. For several public service organisations, such as private sector organisations, the future is anchored on the so-called ‘virtual organisation’ as the ultimate strategic alliance (Dessler, 1995). As such the Zimbabwe Public Service Commission, together with the private sector, the Zimbabwe High Commissioner to Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) worked together in a Negotiating Skills Training Programme for the benefit of employees in both the public and private sectors. This concerted effort sought to get rid of the common belief that such skills are less important in public service. Equally, it also enhanced, through extensive interaction, a change in attitudes among participants. This should continue to strengthen the culture of collaborations and networks between leaders and the civil service within public institutions.

Conclusion

This chapter presented major issues affecting public leadership in the twenty-first century. It discussed how a careful combination of both practices and strategies if properly utilised, can result in a huge difference towards the organisation’s commitment to remain aloft in the context of an ever-dynamic environment. The chapter largely draws on empirical evidence from Zimbabwe and showed how the government has progressed in its ongoing public service reform efforts. In this study, the major conclusion is that developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills

remains a top priority in the context of low public sector resource settings. This HRM renewed observation considers employees as an antidote to realise the extent and emerging challenges of the twenty-first-century. Therefore, there is an imperative need to take them on board in the civil service reform process and persistently empower them by giving them appropriate skills to strengthen the creation of leadership skills and capabilities that are good enough to meet twenty-first-century challenges and opportunities. All these fall under the integrated leadership style that marries both the transactional and transformational leadership behaviours as the best fit for public leaders to effectively lead the followers in the context of limited fiscal space. The development of leadership competencies should not be restricted to rank as defined by the structure of the organisation.

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Chapter 7

Balancing the Twin Challenges of Performance Management and Culture Transformation in the Public Sector



Bernard Nkala and Mervis Chiware

Abstract The chapter explored the relationship between performance management implementation and culture transformation in the Zimbabwean public sector. Zimbabwe's public sector has been criticised for its poor performance culture characterised by misaligned relationships and shared norms, beliefs, and values developed over time through both formal and informal performance management arrangements. Reviewed literature on government personnel performance management reports, policy documents and in-depth interviews aided in gaps identification and proposal of recommendations. The study revealed a significant association between culture and performance management implementation. Lack of or inadequate training and proper orientation in performance management, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, shortage of policies supporting the implementation process, poor communication in performance planning, poor feedback on performance and lack of employee involvement in the performance management system implementation culminate in a negative attitude to a performance management system. To achieve performance culture transformation, public service should develop policies to enforce compliance, set a continuous feedback system that decreases bureaucracy, endorse long-term orientation, value creation linking rewards and performance, and strengthen the link between cost-effective integrated performance measurement and strategic objectives as cultural priorities across all levels of service. Adoption of a culture of performance management brings about an improved use of performance measurement systems.

Keywords Performance management · Culture · Public service · Twenty-first century

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Introduction and Background

Performance management reforms have been introduced across different countries and public sector organisations with the dual aim of improving both government performance and accountability (Jakobsen et al., 2018). Wouter Vandenebeele (2008) describes the public sector as a frequently changing and progressively output-oriented environment that possess exceptional challenges on the realisation of benefits from performance management. The attitudes and behaviours of employees have always been critical to the performance of public sector agencies, however in an environment characterised by heightened demands and low resource setting, the equation is on how best to motivate and instil a strong performance culture within the organisation. More often, a narrow understanding of performance management can instil a disastrous performance culture and have a destructive impact on the entire organisational performance (Tewodros, 2016).

Gerrish (2016) suggests that the public sector has struggled to deliver on the promises of performance management, consequently, less attention has been paid to how performance management reform affects performance culture, work relations between public managers and their subordinates. Performance management systems have fashioned widespread resistance and negative work perceptions among public sector employees (Pihl-Thingvad, 2016). If performance management systems are implemented in ways that demotivate employees, it is difficult to see how they can succeed in improving public service performance. Public managers have been charged with transmitting to their employees the purposes, meaning, and usefulness of performance systems often shaped by external influences on the public sector institutions. The chapter discusses the challenges of balancing performance management and culture transformation in the public sector using the Zimbabwe public sector perspective. In addition, the study investigated the critical challenges that the public sector in Zimbabwe is facing in the implementation of the performance management system. Policy recommendations were drawn on how to promote strong performance culture essential in achieving the desired public sector goals, based on performance management implementation gaps.

Public sector performance management is described as an ‘organised, interrelated strategies and activities to improve performance of individuals, teams and organisations (Armstrong, 2017). It improves the performance of individuals and teams whose purpose is to enhance the achievements of work goals and outcomes for the government (Jakobsen et al., 2018). The goal of contemporary public policy focuses on managing public sector resources more efficiently and effectively. Given that managers play a key role in how public sector resources are used, strategies implemented to improve the knowledge, skills and capacities of public sector managers are fundamental to realizing this goal (Avanzi et al., 2018). In contrast to the traditional approach to management, that focuses on management by command, performance management focuses on the theory of managing by agreement in advance (Mohammadi & Sharifzadeh, 2018) thus it is viewed as means of getting

better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards, and competence requirements (Moullin, 2017). Performance management consists of a combination of interconnected activities and processes that are undertaken holistically for promoting high performance and enhancing organisational objectives (Armstrong, 2017). Public sector performance management harmonizes an all-inclusive and logical diversity of human resource management practices that collectively inspire and contribute to the improvement of performance culture (Armstrong, 2017). Performance management emphasises directing workforce energy towards realizing strategic organisational goals (Gerrish, 2016). Therefore, if the performance culture is weak, achievement of the envisaged public sector goals is highly compromised. The performance management process is expected to deal with misaligned performance beliefs and cultural tendencies developed over time. The public sector managers ought to identify performance deviations and through the implementation of a performance management system, develop intervention programmes to deal with the gaps i.e., attitudes, individual values, and weak performance foundation.

In Zimbabwe, the implementation of performance management is premised on the integrated results-based management (IRBM) approach developed into a proven and accepted approach for improved public sector accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency (Alois, 2012). The integrated results-based management (IRBM) carries a component of personnel management expected to support performance culture transformation from an activity based-focus to a more results-oriented focus (Rasappan, 2010: 02). The need for IRBM has been triggered by the problem of an ineffective old performance management system that was viewed as promoting laziness amongst public servants, poor working culture, lack of motivation due to the absence of clear deliverables and understanding of the benefits from performance management (*GoZ Public Service RBM Training Manual*, 2009). Public sector performance management system should result in efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, innovations, and employee satisfaction (Mohammadi & Sharifzadeh, 2018).

Performance culture can be understood firstly, as a commitment among the frontline staff to managing all aspects of organisational performance to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives (Pietro & Andrey, 2010). Secondly, understanding performance culture is most noticeable on the corporate level, reflecting the culture of performance measurement. One of the greatest challenges for the public service management teams in Zimbabwe is to share and spread its insight, establishing a culture of performance management across all performance levels. The research aims at addressing the following key questions; What are the impediments to performance management implementation in Zimbabwe's public sector? How can a culture of 'performance management be implemented within the government service departments?

Performance management is a continuous communication process between employees and line managers aimed to unleash employees' potentials and improve organisational effectiveness (Sales, 2019; Mone & London, 2018). Published literature on Zimbabwe public sector suggests there are still performance management

implementation difficulties experienced from poor communication of performance deliverables and largely conflicting performance data thereby suggesting the existence of challenges in building high-performance culture amid weak performance management foundations.

Literature Review

Arnaboldi et al. (2004) propose that the disparities between high and low performing public sector workforce may, to a certain extent, be credited to the adoption and execution of weak performance management practices. The core drivers of peak performance revolve around a prevalent organisation-wide commitment to performance, the ability to recognise and address performance or competence gaps, a high degree of flexibility (Frederiksen et al., 2020). Eventually, the capacity of the public sector to recognize and respond to external influences through an effective performance systems policy is a crucial determinant of a strong organisational performance culture. However, modern public sector institutions have implemented performance management divorced from external influences like cultural tendencies in the society where the workforce is drawn from and expectations on rewards among others. The literature review was done for this chapter established that factors influencing public sector performance management and culture transformation included external, institutional, and structural, leadership and management, technical capability, organisational culture and behavioural change (Meier & Bohte, 2001). The other factors considered by researchers though found to have an inconsistent influence on performance culture are the size and type of organisation (Meier & Bohte, 2001). Although many theories help to focus performance management practices on any organisation, the Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy theory helps us to understand some of the underlying factors determining effective performance management and culture transformation in a public sector setting.

Expectancy Theory

The expectancy theory offers the conceptual basis for a compensation is driven performance management approach. The theory suggests the workforce become engaged and begin to perform if their remuneration expectation is met. Employees become motivated to change their behaviours or performance if such change is rewarded (Armstrong, 2012). Therefore, based on the expectancy theory, performance management tends to yield results and desired performance culture, if public sector compensation levels improve thereby suggesting there is a strong association between performance and remuneration.

The compensation-driven performance management approach tends to focus on short term matters at the expense of workforce capability problems that are long

term. Critics have warned that the adoption of this theory for public sector settings may be costly when the remuneration framework is incorrect and not performance-based. While public sector human resources policy guides departments to restrain the growth of the wage bills with rewarding performance, this policy approach often fails to consider that the return on the performance remuneration may not be equal to the implementation costs.

Goal-Setting Theory

The Goal-Setting Theory was proposed by Latham and Locke in 1979. The theory emphasises four approaches that link organisational goals and outcomes namely target attention at priorities, encouraging efforts, challenging individuals to utilise their expertise and knowledge to improve their chances of success, and enhancing innovation (Latham & Locke, 2018). Goal-Setting Theory underpins the general principles and aspects of performance management such as agreeing on objectives, performance feedback, and conducting performance reviews. Performance reviews are expected to focus on the future and potential development instead of the past and criticism. This theory takes on a development-based approach to performance thus becomes relevant in explaining why the workforce may desire to continuously improve themselves, in the process adapting to a culture of performing. Employees' development based on the performance management system helps to improve the capacity of both the organisation and employees by linking both the individual (employee) and organisation objectives. Therefore, the theory suggests competence is regarded as a prerequisite for performance because it is only through their aptitude and knowledge that employees can adopt a culture of performing (Sanghi, 2016).

The goal-setting theory assumes training needs identification, and a skills development approach, are fundamental parts of performance management (Popovič et al., 2018). It is through training and development that employees can develop in the areas identified as requiring improvement when they attain such skills slowly develop a culture of performing. Once employees begin to accept the need for personal development, they realise an opportunity to take charge of their personal and career development. The theory becomes relevant in exploring the challenges likely affecting public sector institutions especially carefully following the four approaches proposed under this theory.

Methodology

The study used the interpretive paradigm to identify factors influencing performance culture and implementation of performance management in the Zimbabwe public sector. The paradigm permitted the interpretation of the findings and detail the meaning for the benefit of the public service and its stakeholders. A qualitative

research approach was followed as it can effectively explore experiences, attitudes, and perspectives of the public sector workforce with regards to the challenges faced by the public sector in the implementation of a performance management system in Zimbabwe. This assessment was conducted most in Harare where the human resources department headquarters offices are situated.

Document analysis technique was employed where performance reports, policy documents and published literature were reviewed to identify the existing challenges on performance management systems in the public sector. The study further relied on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as the main data generation instruments to verify data on workforce perspectives and policy positions taken by authorities in the process of implementing a performance management system. Creswell and Miller (2000) recommendations were followed in the study to ensure the validity of qualitative research by obtaining feedback on what interviewees and key informants intended during the interview. This was achieved through summarising what informants said to validate their views. At the data analysis, stage the authors discussed the initial themes until the agreement was reached. Cross-validation and group explanation are essential to enhancing intersubjective understanding, analytic rigour, and soundness of the analyses of the results. For the avoidance of concealing information and other sensitive data about the subject matter at the research, pseudo-names were incorporated to refer to the interviewees' expressions. Finally, the descriptive data analysis was utilised in presenting findings and meaning.

Results and Discussions

Zimbabwe Public Sector Performance Management Implementation

Despite the public sector performance management system expected to result in efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, innovations, and employee satisfaction (Mohammadi & Sharifzadeh, 2018), the past public sector Employee Satisfaction Surveys of 2013 and 2016 in Zimbabwe pointed out that there is still an exhibit of dissatisfaction, disengagement, and low-performance standards amongst public servants. Generally, performance management is a continuous communication process between employees and line managers aimed to unleash employees' potentials and improve organisational effectiveness (Sales, 2019; Mone & London, 2018). The study revealed one of the problems of performance management amongst Zimbabwean public sector employees is the untapped potential, poor communication of performance deliverables and largely conflicting performance data thereby suggesting the existence of challenges in building high-performance culture amid weak performance management foundations. The refinement of strategic objectives into key deliverables is critical to ineffective performance management (Armstrong, 2017; Gerrish, 2016).

Focus Group Discussions concurred that the public sector workforce, especially those in the lower levels of ministries and departments had not clearly understood and appreciated the performance management system. As proposed by the Goal setting theory, (Latham and Locke, 2018), the results support the assertion that employee performance culture will only be strong once they realise their personal need to develop and grow certain competencies or skills, while embracing the role of the performance management system. The low levels of appreciation of the performance management system were largely attributed to a lack of orientation on the benefits of performance culture and measurement necessary to effectively implement the system. Workforce orientation was rather inadequate, ineffective, and appeared lacking amongst public sector employees especially those newly appointed, suggesting a weak foundation for promoting a culture of high performers.

Based on the research reviews, it was apparent that the performance management system in Zimbabwe had not transformed the public sector into a learning organisation where experimentation and performance culture improvement become apparent. The study findings lead us to suggest that the public sector agencies were not adhering to some of the basic principles of performance management system hence fell far short of meeting the minimum requirements of the 'New Public Sector performance management best practices. Performance management implementation seemed to point out that the system is not yet customized to recognise local context factors essential in explaining culture transformation, as the public sector workforce continued to be labelled as non-performers, and demotivated. Therefore, there might be a need to customize the performance management system to address the contextual factors of the local public service environment.

Challenges on Effective Performance Management Implementation in Zimbabwe

Resource Constraints on Performance Management and Culture Transformation

The critical resource constraints amongst most of the Zimbabwe public service departments had also reduced performance management implementation to a mere rhetoric paper exercise with nearly very little happening in practice. Based on the assessment, conducting performance appraisals and the evaluation exercise had turned to be a 'ritual and ceremonial' completion of appraisal forms, a mere formality of conducting progress reviews and final ratings. This has little impact on the performance culture and efficiency, the effectiveness of service delivery standards in general. Lack of acceptance that the performance management system is attached to any meaningful remuneration benefits appeared to have influenced public sector employees' negative attitudes towards the system and had not embraced the results-oriented performance culture. In line with the expectancy theory (Armstrong, 2012)

employees generally become highly engaged and develop a performing culture if their remuneration expectations appear to be met. It was disturbing to argue that senior management in the public service in Zimbabwe was not motivating, supervising, and championing performance management implementation yet top leadership is the most important element of a successful performance management system reform regime. The weakest link of implementing a performance management system emerged to be the absence of regular reviews, updates, feedback, monitoring and evaluation that are very important during implementation. The theory proves that learning during implementation, making adjustments, refinements and adaptation as informed by feedback and results from monitoring and evaluation keeps the system relevant and highly supporting high-performance culture.

Insufficient Monitoring and Evaluation

Luwanga (2011) stresses that evaluation in performance management programmes is a critical management and quality assurance tool for achieving better results during the management of performance processes. Timely evaluations of performance management systems enable organisations to adjust accordingly and ensure their approaches suit the changing and complex landscape in the organisation (Martí, 2019). The study revealed in Zimbabwe, the performance management system lacks adequate monitoring and evaluation efforts. The performance management system, though clear and promising, do not have a monitoring and evaluation plan or framework and therefore tends to be a traditional approach inherited from public sector tendencies on an annual basis. Similarly, Bester and Münster (2016) believes that utilising the results of evaluations are the practical pathway to developing and sustaining a culture of results. As a result, in Zimbabwe, implementation of performance management tends to be short term focused thus ignoring long-term investing in building a culture of results. For instance, performance appraisal reports are often ignored and do not feed into the bigger picture of employee development. Mayne (2007) observes that developing an evaluative culture will not happen scientifically i.e., through ‘osmosis’ but requires thoughtful efforts by the organisation senior managers to encourage, implement and support such a culture. If performance management is underpinned by effective monitoring and evaluation pillars, it would be easy to identify performance bottlenecks and in no time be able to direct efforts towards culture transformation.

Silo Tendencies Affecting Performance Management and Culture Transformation

The study findings revealed the existence of a silo culture within most public service departments in Zimbabwe, where internal departments within work in isolation from others thus becoming a stumbling block to the successful implementation of the performance management system in the public sector. Schein (2010) further concurs

that departments, particularly in a large organisation, tend to work in isolation. As a result, there are no platforms for other departments to appreciate what the inter-departmental roles are towards the attainment of the overall ministry goals. This opinion is supported by Denison (2011), who argues that in the absence of teamwork, silo cultures may crop up and cautions that in recent years the silo culture has been recorded as one of the foremost causes of organisational ineffectiveness. Performance management is expected to function in a coordinated framework where employees will easily appreciate the integration between departments. The findings confirmed the existing theory as there appeared to be a lack of integrated performance planning, implementation, and coordination within the Zimbabwe public sector intel agencies. The silo mentality undermines the consensus-building towards culture transformation.

The study also revealed the expectation of a high level of conformity to processes and procedures within the public sector that has the effect of dampening out of bounds thinking and becomes a hindrance to creativity. Public servants are now viewed as lacking creativity and that culture has been unbroken for quite some time. Therefore, the research established there is a need for flexibility within performance management systems that permit all players to contribute their views on how the system may be improved. Traditional public sector performance management systems tend to discourage innovation and only promote rating high performance through observing a high level of compliance thereby extinguishing efforts towards building a results-oriented performance culture. The focus on conformity to results discourages innovation in the processes and ultimately negatively impacting on the drive for continuous process improvement. This rigidity does not help in the creation of an enabling environment that would lead to the successful implementation of the performance management system.

Lack of Consultation and Feedback

The study found that one of the critical challenges faced by the public sector in Zimbabwe is the lack of consultation amongst policy developers, implementation officers and the employees themselves in the implementation of the performance management system. Employees appear a disinterested group in implementing a performance management system. The data revealed there was poor communication in performance planning, poor feedback on performance and lack of employee involvement in the performance management system implementation. Employees were not adequately consulted during the development of the performance management policy framework and any changes that arise during the implementation phase. Poor communication of performance management policy framework within the organisation leads to rejection of elements by employees. Often, misunderstanding of the policy directives has caused disparities in the application of the performance management tool.

Public sector transformation is likely to be experienced when performance data are adequately utilised and communicated with high levels of emotional intelligence.

The findings from this study revealed that the absence of performance feedback has nearly led to disintegration in employee attitudes towards organisational goals and objectives, that ultimately lead to the public sector inefficiencies. The management teams in the Zimbabwe public sector enterprises should exploit existing information technology i.e., in communicating how performance management will be implemented and other useful information to improve workforce engagement. This study, therefore, concludes that effective communication is essential at every stage of the performance management cycle for the public sector agencies. Employees need to be primarily engaged from the performance planning stage, in setting clear measurable and result in oriented performance objectives. Excellent communication is also important during performance evaluation and in providing feedback to support subordinates in guaranteeing performance improvement, especially where there is performance deviation.

Lack of or Inadequate Training

The research established that public sector management in Zimbabwe is poorly trained to put the performance management system into effective operation. There is a lack of technical skill to professionally apply principles of performance management. Due to the high rate of attrition amongst management grades, the public service now is manned by teams that did not receive requisite training on how to implement a performance management system. The absence of training suggests that it will be difficult to break the existing culture of poor performance unless staff is fully equipped with the necessary skills and information on implementing and managing performance. Equally, the government need to avail adequate resources required in implementing the regulatory performance management system to realise positive outcomes in the immediate future.

Performance Management Implementation and Culture Transformation

Cultural influences encompass norms, modes of operation, communications, understandings, and tacit routines (Woolcock, 2014). Edgar Schein (1992) proposes that leaders have Edgar Schein (1992) e two sets of mechanisms that permit them to influence cultural priorities. As propounded by Edgar Schein (1992), the primary mechanisms include leaders' active involvement in the action, using performance measurement systems, coaching workforce, motivating, and promoting employees, amongst many. Secondary mechanisms include support structures that solidify the culture change such as organisational routines and procedures, physical space, formal statements, etc. The role of leaders in culture building within Zimbabwe public service authorities need to be revisited as the leaders seem not to appreciate the gains

that can be attained from active leadership involvement in performance measurement. The culture of performance measurement is not yet fully embedded as one of the public sector ethos and therefore performance management continues to appear irrelevant in building culture transformation. There are no support structures to direct effort towards culture building. Often leadership is silent in promoting culture transformation amongst the workforce, thus there are no clear procedures to promote high levels of engagement as performance management and performance culture seem to be two separate elements that can never be addressed simultaneously.

Generally, public sector reform seeks to embed a performance culture in which all agents realise the importance of performance management and use it to boost organisational achievements. Moynihan and Pandey et al. (2010) suggested a positive link between leadership and culture, through that leaders can steer culture. However, it can be an inconsistent link, if those being led are not convinced by the leaders' apparent commitment (Dull, 2009). Schick (2014) argues that where culture is aligned with performance objectives, it can be effective in overcoming the challenges of sub-standard results or missing the set outcomes. Where culture is not aligned with performance objectives, it can be a source of resistance, opposition, and ultimately poor performance. The suggestions by Schick were confirmed from the research findings as Zimbabwe public sector leadership argued that the existing culture in the service seems conflicting with performance objectives. The reflex action emanates from the 'cat and mouse game' that emerged in the past from employee-employer industrial relations. Public servants in Zimbabwe appeared not to trust the government and eventually resist and oppose government directives on implementing set performance objectives. This view was often supported by data analysed from the periodic performance reviews under the Government Performance Management Framework (GoZ OPC, Performance Monitoring, 2020).

Employees working in the public sector are perceived to have a more supportive attitude to their work and a stronger commitment to performance goals, rather than the more utilitarian and contractual association attributed to private sector entities (Rasul & Rogger 2018). The hypothesis remains not approved in low resource public sector settings like Zimbabwe where public servants lie within a bracket definition of those highly disengaged, demotivated and lacking a result-oriented performance culture. The performance management system in Zimbabwe has become a source of dissatisfaction than being a stimulus to high performance. In attaining a culture of performance management, the public sector should promote long-term orientation, value creation, and the link between performance measurement and strategic objectives as cultural priorities across all sector levels (Pietro & Andrey, 2010). An effective leadership and management style is essential in the successful implementation of performance management, especially the visible attitude of being willing to share any performance information (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; du Plessis & van Niekerk, 2017). Continuously conveying ownership to the various service departments about what the entity intends to achieve can contribute as the success factors to the implementation of the performance management system.

The Fontaine-Ortiz et al. (2005) argues that the barrier to overcome in effectively implementing a performance management system, within the public sector is the

development of a results-oriented organisational culture. Bester and Münster (2016) further expounds that building a results culture is about changing behaviours as much it is about improving systems, tools, and capacities. Equally, Vähämäki (2018) reports that some evaluations indicate the absence of a results culture is due to attitudes of the workforce who lack an ‘appropriate mindset’. Despite being reflected as a prerequisite for effective public sector performance management, the establishment of a results culture sustained by an appropriate incentive framework in Zimbabwe remains a big challenge. Moreover, Miller & Le Breton–Miller, (2011) added that successful implementation of public sector performance management system will be dependent on the organisation’s capacity to create a supervision culture that is focused on results. Therefore, there is a need for an appropriate results-oriented culture transformation and building for successful implementation of performance management system in Zimbabwe. Equally, there is a need to re-cultivate a shared understanding of what performance management means amongst the entire public service employees and ensure there is a shared commitment to performance building a strong culture on both managers and the lower-level staff. A shared understanding is necessary because it ensures that performance indicators and performance data are interpreted consistently at different levels of the organisation and eventually translates movement towards the culture of performance management.

External Influences on Performance Management and Culture Transformation

These influences are, by definition, actions or events that are exerted from outside the public sector coming from other parts of the jurisdiction. External influences can be positive, negative, transformative, or reinforcing. One of the external influences identified in literature comes from the political sphere, especially through embedded political appointments arising from time to time, and more broadly through policies and practices that the public sector is obliged to implement (Fritz et al., 2017). More often, shifts in political power have prompted major changes to the performance management arrangements (Bevan & Hood, 2006). In other settings, they have maintained and reinforced the status quo basic (Hawke, 2012; Venner, 2019). In Zimbabwe, culture transformation was experienced during the shift of political leaders in line ministries witnessing the coming in of the military trained cadres into the public service mainstream. The changes i.e., in the public health sector culminated in a change in performance culture with an emphasis on paying attention to detail and commitment to serve the nation. However, critics have raised concern that the political changes that occurred in most line ministries and parastatals destroyed momentum and are bound to weaken performance culture if they continue.

Institutional and structural factors control the form, scope and framework in which performance management operates. They have a direct effect, through the determination of what is required from organisations, such as the form, content,

and frequency of reporting on performance. They also have an indirect effect by excluding or limiting what is not permitted, or what is more difficult because it requires management across structural boundaries where accountability and responsibility become blurred or more complex. Key informants interviewed identified organisational structure and management hierarchy as very important influences on performance management in Zimbabwe. The bureaucratic tendencies largely affect the effective implementation of performance management resulting in employees losing a result-oriented performance focus.

Economic and social changes have been picked as another subgroup of external influences on public sector performance management and culture transformation. Economic downturns with contractionary fiscal penalties have been shown to displace evidence-based policy refinements and reallocations with arbitrary sectoral or across-the-board expenditure cuts (Schick, 2014). External pressures have been identified as providing a catalyst or tipping point for the introduction of substantial change in performance management arrangements (Moynihan & Kroll, 2018). In Zimbabwe, the COVID 19 pandemic greatly influenced the arrangements of implementing performance management in the public sector and to date has exerted pressure on management to adopt a paradigm shift from traditional methods of conducting performance appraisals. In 2020, the Public Service Commission waived implementation of performance appraisals in the wake of COVID 19 citing difficulties in conducting performance reviews and appraisals as employees were working from home for nearly more than half of the year. The policy arrangement set a dangerous performance culture that is likely going to affect the productivity of the public sector post-COVID 19. The difficulties faced by public servants in Zimbabwe line Ministries, especially fears and the exposure to contracting COVID 19 during work dampened the morale of the workforce as many felt they need to work fewer days to reduce the risks of contracting the disease.

Behavioural Influences on Performance Management Implementation

According to Amjad & Skinner, (2008) the behavioural influences such as motivation, attitudes and values that people hold are critical to performance improvement. Likewise, the Common wealth Secretariat (2011) concurred with the view that performance is largely linked to the behaviour and attitudes of the workforce hence the focus of any management efforts should be to change misaligned attitudes and behaviours that do not enhance performance. Wachira (2013) emphasise that any intervention that does not address attitudes towards self-evaluation, use of information for improvement, motivation and incentives will result in poor services, poor accountability and poor decision making. The Zimbabwe public sector needs to draw intervention measures that help to identify misaligned attitudes. However, it

will remain difficult to develop an acceptable intervention measure that will not be viewed as punitive and end up demotivating the targeted employees.

A collective justification for introducing performance management practices by many governments has been to provide stronger incentives and signals to organisations and their staff about the expectations on their behaviour, productivity, and satisfaction. Literature supports findings that incentives or sanctions are strong, performance-based initiatives that can have perverse effects through gaming, cheating or misinformation (Radin, 2006; Hood, 2012). The dishonest performance practices can be ameliorated or eliminated by more effective oversight, increased dialogue and building trust to address the source of behavioural discord.

Achieving Culture Transformation

The research findings indicated that the adoption of a culture of performance management could bring about a more integrated and cost-effective use of performance measurement systems, whereas a culture of performance measurement could generate malfunctions, such as fixation on targets and indicators, rather than the achievement of underlying objectives. Although embedding a culture of performance management is not an easy task, shared understanding can be created through education and maintained through a structure of appropriate practices and routines. Subsequently, shared commitment can be created by involving people in the development and use of Performance management and maintained through the use of reward systems. Although the scope for involvement of staff and the use of financial rewards is limited in the public sector, a broader stakeholder-driven approach to the design and implementation of performance management systems are confidently advisable (Adams & Micheli, 2005). Research proved that because of the co-existence of innumerable performance management frameworks at different levels of government, relationships between scorecards at diverse agency levels are certainly not easy to establish and manage (Neely & Micheli, 2006). While it is possible to say that a top-down approach, on both national and local scales, seems to be necessary to promote the use of performance management, this is not sufficient to foster a culture of performance management. Therefore, in Zimbabwe, leadership and top management buy-in are essential requirements to promote the shared understanding and commitment to the use of performance management. Indeed, lack of leadership and management commitment have been indicated as the most severe problems in implementing performance management systems (De Waal, 2006; Neely & Bourne, 2000). The next challenge, therefore, is to promote a shared understanding of and commitment to the culture of performance management across all levels of public service delivery from policymakers to top management, from middle managers to frontline staff. To achieve performance culture transformation, public service should develop policies to enforce compliance, set a continuous feedback system that decreases bureaucracy, endorse long-term orientation, value creation linking rewards and performance, and

strengthen the link between cost-effective integrated performance measurement and strategic objectives as cultural priorities across all levels of service.

Conclusion

The study examined the challenges faced by public sector agencies in implementing performance management and culture transformation in Zimbabwe. The study found strong support for the proposition that performance management and culture transformation in the public sector is mainly influenced by external, institutional, and structural, leadership and management, fiscal, technical, cultural, and behavioural factors. The most important influence on performance management in the Philippines was institutional and structural aspects. It remains essential for the public sector in Zimbabwe to continuously review its policy positions using evidence-based approaches and sustain human resources decisions based on research findings explored.

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Chapter 8

Transformational Workforce Training Approaches for the Public Sector in the Twenty-First Century



Bernard Nkala and Mervis Chiware

Abstract Workforce training and learning is the cornerstone in the use of human capital development tools vital for public service growth and productivity in the twenty-first century. The public sector in general, invest large sums of money into the training of the workforce, without clear accountability of the extent the applied training approaches are being helpful to match the skills deficit. Drawing on Dessler's four-stage systematic training and development model and Phillip's Level 3–5 model and theory of training, evaluation and return on investment, the study explored the gaps in the implementation of training and learning approaches in the case of Zimbabwe public sector, systematically establishing failure or critical success factors influencing training and development. Using qualitative data, from in-depth interviews and observations from purposively selected public sector training institutions, it was established that training and learning do not follow a systematic model. The public sector over relies on subjective traditional approaches for training needs identification. There is a lack of scientific human resources management tools to calculate actual workforce needs and skills gaps to inform training. Funding of training is currently undirected, lacks a strategy and is largely not evaluated measuring return on training investment. The adoption of scientific tools to drive evidence-based training strategies would be essential to direct training efforts. Accelerated efforts in expanding partnerships in the training of the workforce will support meeting long term public sector human capital development goals and envisaged outcomes.

Keywords Workforce training · Learning · Development · Public sector

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Introduction and Background Information

The scope of functions of the contemporary public sector is quickly changing. Therefore, building a workforce that matches the changes requires new approaches (Patrick Ibarra, 2021). Training and development programmes play a central role in public sector entities as they focus on improving employee performance at the workplace, thus updating employee knowledge and enhancing their skills. Where training and development are effectively implemented, it is easier for the public sector to attain its envisaged deliverables, evaluate the job performance and accordingly guide decisions like employee promotion, succession planning, rewards, compensations, welfare facilities, employee retention and motivation (Diego, 2016; Manzini & Shumba, 2014; Mashange et al., 2019).

Evidence from published literature advocates there will be significant changes in what public services do in the future due to the demographics shift, the emergence of new technologies, and citizen expectations change (Catherine Needham, Catherine Mangan, Helen Dickinson, 2014). Questions of ethics, emotional labour and relational exchanges amongst the citizens and public sector workforce are likely going to inform the nature of work, desired attributes, and skills to be attained for the public service workforce. Career paths and structures are fast-changing, and the traditional boundaries of current public sector jobs are starting to be weak as the workforce seek portfolio careers and the modern public sector structures seek individuals who can shift from project to project rather than fit a defined role. Therefore, these structural changes will likely require public service entities to adopt robust capacity building programmes that are relevant in addressing the demand for public services.

Dewe et al. (2012) contend that the contemporary public sector experience three major change forces namely, internationalisation and global competition, advances in technology and changing workforces. Therefore, it becomes critical for public sector employees to be capacitated with 21st-century skills that permit them to be successful while executing their duties in multifaceted work environments. The modern public sector entities require critical thinking skills, creative thinking, collaboration, information literacy and communication to be able to fully respond to the 21st public management demands. (Dewe et al., 2012). Many scholars support that the public sector requires advanced skills to observe, organise, see what is not there, analyse, problem-solve in an open-minded, work effectively with others, compromise, delegate, ability to identify, find, evaluate, and use information (Elliot, 2020).

Workforce potentials are developed through skills-building tools namely development and training, experiences, and education that are largely associated with civilization (Malvezzi, 2015). Workers can learn and develop, of which organisations have realised human capital due to its intangible importance, is worth forming (Chiavenato, 2009). Hence must be developed through training to address the variation of labour market conditions and the increase of international competition (Werther & Davis, 2008). Therefore, the training and development of employees become the cornerstone of human capital development. Zimbabwean public sector

invests large sums of money and expends a great deal of effort in trying to attend to the skills deficit as part of its transformation drive. Critics have analysed that despite the government's huge investment and effort, the training and development of the workforce appear to fail to close the skills gap (Gurira, 2015). The Zimbabwe National Vision 2030 envisage transforming the economy riding on assumption that state institutions are adequately provided with skilled and committed personnel thus with the capacity of its human resources to respond to the diverse needs of the population. The need for training and development of the workforce is enforced guided by Zimbabwe Manpower Development Amendment Act, 2020 [Chapter 28:02] that seeks to provide for the establishment, of technical or vocational institutions, universities, and vocational training schemes and development of human resources; to provide for the training and the certification of skilled workers (Matanga, 2018). The Public Service Commission has fifty-six training centres nationwide, expected to cater for the manpower development needs of government and service departments (Manzini & Shumba, 2014). Within the public sector, each department is expected to identify training gaps and provide training for its employees. However, most of the literature on training and development is descriptive and therefore do not provide insights necessary for decision-making in the Zimbabwean public-sector context. Not much is known about what factors contribute successfully to the implementation of training and development of the workforce in the Zimbabwe public sector.

Therefore, drawing on Dessler's four-stage model of systematic training and development and Phillip's model and theory of training, evaluation and return on investment (Level 3–5) this chapter explores the implementation of workforce training and development in the Zimbabwe public sector with a view to establishing critical factors that determine success or failure.

Methodology

A qualitative study approach was employed to assess training and development implementation challenges and determinants using the case of the Zimbabwe public sector. solicit the views of employees in the chosen department. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and secondary data. The study relied on both primary and secondary data training and development in the Zimbabwe public sector. Secondary data in form of government literature, policy documents, reports and documents on training and development, was readily available thus making it easy for the study to analyse the training and development stages as proposed from Dessler's and Philip's training and development models. Training data was accessed from line Ministries Human Resources Directorates.

The research followed purposeful sampling to conduct in-depth interviews mainly to verify policy decisions or gaps of the line Ministries on implementation of training

and development within government departments, its impact and return on investment concept on the training of the workforce and concluded by establishing the proposed intervention measures. The in-depth interviews were used to verify and validate the reported data in line with policy positions taken in view of public sector training and development programmes. The key informants comprised of the human resources practitioners managing training and development functions and the Public Service Commission training and development institutions across the provinces in Zimbabwe. The data collection instrument utilised became an interview guide that was designed to elicit the participants' views on the implementation of training developed in line with Dessler's four-stage model. All interviews were recorded and played later, and major points were translated as findings. The interviews followed the thematic approach mainly limiting to the stages and levels discussed by two theories of Dessler and Philip on training and development. Prio to these interviews, telephonic appointments with targeted participants were made with a planned interview schedule of a maximum of 40 minutes each.

The various training policies for programmes in different professionals were analysed to establish synergies and any form of integration in terms of policy scope and intent. To maintain the confidentiality of data, the study sought permission to access training data, that was granted, and all views expressed by informants were coded by allocating a number to protect the participants.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Public Sector Training and Development Approach

Training entails a teaching–learning process that must respond to the identified set of needs (Parisi & Chibbaro, 1998), increasing human capital with requisite knowledge, essential skills, and abilities (Bohlander et al., 2001), that might have an influence on the present or the future bestowing employees with the appropriate tools to stimulate desired performance and achieve organisational objectives (Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares, 2008). Training in the public sector can be applied for both new and existing employees (Dessler & Varela, 2011), with great emphasis on productivity, creativity, and innovation (Chiavenato, 2009). It is worth noting that training has evolved from the traditional training approaches, that focused on teaching basic techniques or simple tasks. Currently, training approaches have been greatly influenced by humankind progress, technological and computational advances, that call for a new skills series such as teamwork, leadership, communication, and specific skills (Dessler & Varela, 2011). Training and development can help an organisation to remain competitive through the development of specific skills, that may be generated and maintain competitive advantages based on human capital (Hurt, 2016). If done correctly training enhances workers' commitment and help to establish standardized approaches of performing (Felstead et al., 2009).

Bohlander et al. (2001) observed that training contributes to the overall goals, mission, and main strategies of the organisation. Therefore, training is the core of a continuous effort intended to advance the competencies of workers and increase the organisation's performance (Chiavenato, 2009). Training and development in the public sector benefits at the individual level, in tasks such as decision making, leadership, confidence; at the organisational level, especially help to maintain competitiveness, grow profits, create a better image, speed up decision-making; and at human relations level, it improves communication amongst groups and individuals, inducting new employees and nurturing a learning work atmosphere (Werther & Davis, 2008). Training builds employees' attitudes and supports them to achieve better collaboration within the organisation, thus training and development programmes improve the quality of work-life by generating a supportive workplace environment.

A Systematic Approach to Training and Development

Reid & Parsons (1995) argue that for training and development to be high paying or beneficial, the systems approach to training should be adopted. The systematic training approach emphasises that training consists of an orderly, planned sequence of events with the first phase of the training process being an assessment of training needs and the development of training objectives. The second stage entails the actual delivery of training and development, and the last step becomes the evaluation phase (Reid & Parsons, 1995). When following the systematic training and development approach, a task analysis is supposed to be conducted through job analysis focusing on behavioural terms. Items like the job description state the specific job duties and the conditions under that the job is performed. Once a job description is analysed, task specification is done where a list of tasks providing information about what the worker does and how he or she does it, to whom or why is compiled. The task specification permits the determination of what knowledge, skills, abilities, and orientations are essential to perform the job effectively. Therefore, any organisation that intends to professionally develop its workforce may need to uphold the principles of systematic training and development approach to effectively respond to twenty-first century human capital challenges.

The Theoretical Framework

Dessler's Four-Stage Training and Development Model

Dessler (2006) proposed a four-stage training and development model, that suggest for any training and development program to be effective and efficient, it should consist of four stages, namely: training needs identification; instructional design;

training implementation; and training evaluation (Erasmus et al., 2013; Swanepoel et al., 2014). Dessler argues that those managing and pioneering training programmes should first establish the need for training to improve productivity and suggests that the organisation must assess the potential skills required and develop training objectives based on the training needs. In support of Dessler's proposal, Swanepoel et al. (2014) pointed that training needs identification should be the first step that should be conducted across the organisation's functions (done at job and task, and individual levels) to ensure linkage with the organisation's goals and targets for skills to be achieved (Dessler, 2006; Swanepoel et al., 2014). The task analysis should be undertaken of the job of an individual to ascertain the skills needed by an employee to match the duties of that job to design training programmes that suit an individual worker rather than to cater for the requirements for executing a specific task (Dessler, 2006). Once the need to improve the competency of employees is comprehended, a conscious decision should be taken to deliver a training program (Swanepoel et al., 2014: 579). Quite often, the stage of training needs identification is downplayed by most organisations especially bureaucratic governance structures. The needs analysis stage is debatably the most important stage upon that all the other training processes should be guided. Unfortunately, most organisations tend to think actual delivery of training is the only stage that matters in bringing the desired change. Dessler's emphasis on needs analysis is vital in directing the research arguments in this chapter as it permits this study to be inquisitive of whether training needs identification is the basis for adopting other proposed stages within the Zimbabwe public sector.

The second stage in the systematic training approach is the instructional design, involving compiling the training content syllabus, activities or exercises, including material in preparation for the actual implementation of the training and development program (Dessler, 2006). Based on the needs identified, Dessler outlines that the outcome must be determined at this stage, and the kind and nature of training to be provided are set clearer with the training approach, design, content, and methods established. Some common training approaches involve on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, coaching, and job rotation (Reid & Parsons, 1995). The instructional design becomes the most popular domain utilised by many human resources practitioners. However, due to capacity constraints, most public sector departments outsource these stage activities.

According to Dessler's model, the third stage comprises the application of designed training to the identified target population or training participants. The model suggests that training can be implemented in different ways, including on-the-job training, job rotation, coaching and mentoring (Dessler, 2006). On-the-job training can be conducted continuously to address the shortage of skills needed. The implementation of the training programme needs to ensure all the devised training strategies are actioned. In this stage, all the roles of the workforce and employers should be clearly defined and agreed upon for training to be accepted. The last stage in Dessler's (2006) model is the evaluation phase in training and development. Dessler proposes that after all the three stages have been carefully implemented, trainers need to conduct a systematic evaluation of training to establish the extent to that the purpose and training outcomes were achieved. Although this is a crucial

stage to determine the continuation of training, it is often neglected. Swanepoel et al. (2014: 595) agree with Dessler's model regarding training evaluation and offer a more detailed and prescriptive level at which training can be evaluated. They include customer satisfaction, productivity, and employee perceptions regarding the effectiveness of training as some of the levels of evaluation. Therefore, if evaluation is done effectively, it can also inform the needs analysis phase. Desslers' model has been widely utilised in designing and implementing training programmes because of its clarity and simplicity. This study draws from this model to assess and track the effectiveness of training and development programmes in the public sector in the case of Zimbabwe. Therefore, the training and development four-stage model are essential for analysis on how some training programmes do or do not achieve their intended outcomes.

Phillips' Model in Training and Development

Phillips' training and development model (1998) emphasises the value of training discovered through assessing or evaluating training based on costs. Largely the model improved Kirkpatrick's model and added a component when evaluating training. According to the Phillips model, the component entails the determination of organisational benefits with the conversion of the training results to monetary values, known as return on investment (ROI). The Phillips five levels of training and development include Level one as the reaction and action plan mainly encompassing measurement of employee satisfaction with the program. Level two is the learning where there is evaluation of changes of the participants in knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the training program. Level three evaluates applications to work, measuring changes in behaviour towards the work or processes. Level four involves the measurement of Results or changes in the organisation. The last level of importance is Level 5 on Return on Investment where there must be a comparison between costs and benefits obtained (Chmielewski & Phillips, 2002). The Phillips' model emphasises, the return on investment, as an essential and important part for organisations although it is very complex to determine the return on investment in aspects such as training. However, the last level in Phillip's model helps us to identify the missing link between training programmes and return gained by public sector organisations. In the absence of scientific instruments, the model directs us in answering whether the public sector is reaping gainfully from the training investment. The analysis is limited to financial gains only.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Provision of Training and Development in the Public Sector

The analysis established that although training and development programmes are offered in Zimbabwe public sector, training and development does not follow a systematic approach. The Training lacks clarity in implementing the widely proposed systematic process in designing training and development. Training is done in a haphazard and disintegrated manner where many players are planning and implementing training programmes, but these efforts are driven by silos that disapprove that there is no systematic approach followed. The study established that training and development in Zimbabwe follows a multi-sectoral approach but lacks proper coordination when it comes to the national level. The implemented training and development programmes in Zimbabwe do not share any common features except that ultimately are believed to improve the workforce skills. The results disapprove Swanepoel et al. (2014) claim who argued that those managing and pioneering training programmes should first establish the need for training to improve productivity. Public sector productivity levels in Zimbabwe remain arguably low and largely influenced by the mismatch in developing relevant skills to support performance.

In many instances, training and development in the public service are underfunded and given little attention (World Bank, 2018) that makes it ineffective. The study established that in the period 2016–2018, in Zimbabwe, the overall public sector expenditure allocation towards training and development dropped from 33% to about 28% in 2018 indicating a decline in prioritisation of building essential skills to transform the public sector performance. For instance, the public health sector used to be fund training grants of medical specialists to the tune of US\$2 million annually up until 2016, but thereafter, that figure dropped to zero in the preceding years owing to the absence of fiscal space to continue supporting building essential medical skills to meet the population health needs. Zimbabwe witnessed a decline in donor support from 2016 that used to be an essential pillar in funding the training and development of the workforce in different sectors. Most of the development partners are no longer prefer supporting the human resources components especially meeting wages and salaries including training costs that are believed to be obligations of the government as the employer. However, the drop in the funding support continued to widen as the Treasury currently do not allocate line Ministries and departments any training votes. Structurally, training and development programmes are expected to be funded centrally through the Zimbabwe Public Service Commission (PSC) training and development institutes. Unfortunately, from 2016 the PSC changed strategy and transformed training and development to become more a commercial activity where all user departments were to pay from their underfunded budget votes. This development has led to a regression in the efforts to develop essential skills required to address 21st-century public sector challenges. The findings in the case of Zimbabwe fall short of Dewe et al., (2012) theoretical underpinnings that the contemporary public sector experiences internationalisation challenge, global competition, advances in

technology and changing workforces hence it is critical for public sector employees to be capacitated with twenty-first-century skills that permit them to be successful while executing their duties in multifaceted work environments.

An analysis of existing policy instruments and confirmation from key informants, there is a lack of consensus on that skills to be prioritised and developed for the improvement of the public sector service delivery. There is a persistent challenge of skills shortage and mismatching especially for critical professional skills (Zimbabwe National Critical Skills Audit Report, 2018) thus has become a detriment to service delivery. The problem emanates from the fact that public sector human capital development is informed from long term national planning and aspirations as enshrined in the National Development Strategy 1 and National Vision 2030. However, there is the absence of data to guide on the type of skills required immediately for the public sector, to respond to the transformation drive. The public sector lacks a national training policy framework that will help coordinate training and development efforts. Almost all different sectors are coordinating their training efforts independently as a result, it leads to disintegration and fragmentation problems. To effectively coordinate training and development activities, the public sector needs to direct all its efforts from a national policy perspective. The fragmentation of policy approaches on training negatively affects the attainment of essential skills that can match the needs of the economy in the government transformation mantra.

The public sector exhibits problems of poor performance owing to the lack of competencies required for public servants' occupations. In the long term, the envisaged goals of the National Development Strategy 1 are likely to remain a pipedream, given the current poorly implemented training policies and programmes, and the fragmented training human capital and skills-building initiatives undertaken by the public sector human resources departments. The skills profile in Zimbabwe public sector indicates a lack of technical and vocational skills that are expected to be developed in Zimbabwe. Some of the key informants retaliated that of those cadres trained locally, the graduates from such programmes remain academic within public service inclination. The trained cadres lack occupation-specific skill sets required for positions in the public sector, a gap that training and development are expected to have addressed. Training and development plans in the Zimbabwe public sector indicate a detachment from what is needed by industry and that provided by training and development institutions. Often graduates are expected to gain practical skills and experience during their learning period in form of attachments offered at various industries supporting their training interests. Interestingly, the assessment revealed graduates spend their entire attachment periods not exposed to the specific areas that build their professional skills. Instead, students end up doing menial duties that are conflicting with the profession they pursue. Universities and higher learning institutions do not have a mutual agreement with industry on what is expected and the type of exposure to be given to those undergoing training to be able to address industry-specific skill gaps prevailing in the economy. Without such synergies, Zimbabwe public sector may continue developing and supporting the development of its workforce at different learning institutions, yet still, fail to realise any meaningful return from such training arrangements.

The study established that personal development plans amongst public sector departments in Zimbabwe and work skills plans are developed but rarely implemented. Amongst the informants who participated in the study, some indicated public servants rarely get planned training programmes implemented for many reasons. From one of the interview data provided, the respondent cited.

... Public servants in this department and even several others, get training[s] provided [for them] occasionally if lucky enough (R1). Frankly speaking, even if one [I] have skills identified as lacking, workers feel neglected and do not see the employer tacking any deliberate effort to build skills to bridge the gaps...

As a Human Resources practitioner in the Ministry, I confirm that employees have been requesting training for the past five years, but due to budgetary constraints, their pleas haven't been attended to. It has proven to be impossible to be trained while in service except for those with essential skills with seriously compelling circumstances to have them trained or developed. (R2).

... some other needs are prioritised over others (R3).

The reviewed statements sustain the claim that the identified gaps and challenges prevail within the public sector departments. The public sector human resources directorates need to develop a resource pooling framework that will support the development of essential skills if the public sector is to seriously attain 21st-century expectations.

Public Sector Training and Development in the Wake of COVID-19

The systematic training approach to training and development emphasise that effective training involves training instructional design stage (Diego, 2016). This is one of the key stages that need continuous revision for the different training syllabus to be able to address emerging skills and knowledge required in public sector transformation. COVID-19 disrupted the traditional face to face training meetings that were one of the primary approaches in the delivery of training programmes. Under the COVID-19 restrictions, participants are encouraged to meet in controlled numbers i.e., in mid-October 2021, the Zimbabwean government announced that all gatherings can only be done but meetings are only 50% of the holding capacity of that respective place. This calls for training organisers to also adhere to the Statutory Instrument requirement on seating arrangements. In view of the existing environment in the public sector departments, it has been very difficult to implement training techniques i.e., coaching, face-face meetings for obvious reasons of minimising contracting and spreading COVID-19 amongst employees (Nkala & Mervis, 2021). There is a lack of adequate and cost-effective training space or venues that can be utilised while observing the COVID-19 guidelines as guided by the government. In the surge of COVID-19 cases, from 2020–2021, most government service departments suspended training meetings despite the growing need to continuously capacitate employees through training. The pandemic has affected the use of traditional training approaches that have been used

in the past, now demanding the adoption of new approaches suiting the COVID-19 guidelines. In the wake of COVID-19, the public sector was expected to adopt an e-learning mode of training where participants avoid physical contact in minimising the possible spread of the pandemic. However, the new demand for use of technology in training has been the most difficult idea for public sector settings especially those in low resource settings. Zimbabwe is amongst those countries struggling with COVID-19 effects hence investing in electronic learning approaches is not yet a priority while the nation is still aiming to deal with the morbidity challenge.

The Zimbabwe public sector vocational training instructions have been affected by the lack of appropriate infrastructure and resources to support effective e-training in essential practical skills. Similarly, most training institutions now have obsolete training equipment that cannot support participants managing training programmes. In the long run, COVID-19 has negatively affected the effectiveness of training delivery. The government has not invested much in building state of art training equipment that supports e-learning. Similarly, public servants lack skill in the use of technology in learning. About 60% of public sector employees in Zimbabwe are estimated to be computer literate (Diego, 2016), thereby displaying the impossibilities in delivering effective training and development in the face of COVID-19. Therefore, public sector agencies need to begin utilising technology, such as learning management systems (LMS), to turbo-charge the learning experience effectively. This may demand a change in the policy strategy to embrace the contemporary demands posed by social disasters such as COVID-19.

The public sector supports its employees to train and develop abroad especially in search of rare skills not offered locally. This includes medical fields where personnel are expected to spend time acquiring skills while learning from abroad. However, the data collated from public sector employing agencies revealed that COVID-19 disrupted most training programmes that were running. With continents announcing travelling restrictions, most of the training programmes were suspended and some shifted timelines. This affected those who were on full government sponsorship as it became a major cost for the government while it continued paying trainees for longer periods. Locally, the Public Service Commission training institutions also suspended offering institutional training services between March 2020 and January 2021 as most of the training institutions became COVID-19 quarantine and isolation centres. This disrupted the mandate of the PSC of continuously building capacities to meet the twenty-first-century public sector demands.

Identification of Training Needs in the Zimbabwe Public Sector

The theory suggested by Dessler (2006) model proposed that an organisation must assess the potential skills required and develop training objectives based on the training needs that does not find a place in the case of the Zimbabwe public sector. In most cases, training, and development programmes i.e., nursing in health, teaching

in education amongst many, are not informed by the need on the ground but rather now driven by the mandate by which those pioneering strive to be seen doing. There is the absence of a framework to prove the magnitude or size of the actual needs that exists in the public sector to direct training. This problem leads to traditional approaches of training being continuously offered by many public sector training institutions without any relevance in addressing the 21st-century public sector needs and problems.

The public sector agencies generally lack technical skills and knowledge in conducting training needs identification exercises. Often human resources departments are underfunded hence end up relying on training data from unreliable reports submitted by different user departments. Documentary analysis revealed training needs identification is an important stage of the training and development program. Erasmus et al. (2013) guide that any training and development program to be effective and efficient should be based on the initial stage of training needs identification. Contrary, the lack of a formal approach to training needs identification in the Zimbabwe public sector has been blamed on the lack of resources while neglecting the costs of not conducting the needs assessment. Of the key informants interviewed, 80% admitted that within the government human resources departments, training needs identification is not known although assumed to be incorporated in the performance appraisal instruments being chaotically completed. The public sector performance management system is expected to result in efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, innovations, and employee satisfaction. The absence of evidence of conducting formal training needs identification process suggests that most of the training interventions implemented at various levels are misaligned, routine and do not carry the essence of contemporary training skills, knowledge and attitude required for the public sector in the twenty-first century. It is therefore essential for the public sector organisations to invest in building capacity in conducting training needs identification amongst the human resources practitioners in all government departments.

The theory has proved that training needs identification becomes the cornerstone for an effective training and development program (Reid & Parsons, 1995). Equally, training needs identification need to be supported by adequate preparedness to interpret the identified needs and carefully adopt appropriate strategies of addressing the gaps. All the processes of a systematic training design largely depend upon the public sector maturity in prioritising human capital development. The public sector human resources departments need to utilise evidence-based scientific tools like the labour market analysis to help government departments in calculating and estimating the needs for the public sector in the wake of growing population needs. Training gaps need to be calculated factoring the population needs, the demographic and technologic influences thus can estimate what would be the training needs in the short-medium up to the long term. The government must take a conscious step to adopt a policy movement that guides all human resources departments sector-wide to mandatorily conduct training needs identification. The policy must go with adequate resource commitment as identification of training would assist different sectors to

effectively contribute to the achievement of National Development Strategy (NDS) 1 set targets.

Evaluation of the Training and Development Programmes

According to Philip's training and development model, training programmes must be assessed in terms of the return-on-investment concept where the costs of training are weighed against the benefits of training. Although the concept may not be clearly defined, it provides a basis to generally assess if public sector training and development activities are effective. The data revealed that training of skilled workforce in Zimbabwe i.e., doctors and or engineers in the public sector takes a longer period and is more costly. The government in most cases has been supporting the training of specialised skills training abroad while meeting all training costs. However, evidence from human resources directorates indicated that most of the trained cadres do not return to the country or at times spend less time serving in government after qualifying despite being sponsored. The scenario is culminated by the absence of a strong bonding policy that makes it very difficult for cadres to breach bonding contracts after their training. Reports indicated that government loses nearly over 40% of trained cadres while serving their bonding period indicating the poor returns from the training investments.

Training for the public sector in Zimbabwe especially for specialists' skills is government sponsored or subsidised. This arrangement cuts across sectors like education, agriculture, and health. However, despite the government investing in the training and development of the personnel, not all trained cadres are immediately absorbed into government service. This presents a gap where the public sector costs of training always outweigh employing costs. The government is yet to get to a break-even point where those channelled as training input are equivalent to those absorbed into service. This theory works on an assumption that attrition rates will be controlled, and service delivery remains constant.

As purported by Swanepoel et al. (2014), training evaluation must be able to direct training needs identification thus will support continuous learning and development of employees. However, this assumption remains in theory in the public sector as evaluation of training programmes is limited to delivery and immediately after training. The impact of training and development in terms of actual change in behaviour and skill post-training is still absent. The public sector directorates of training and PSC training institutions cannot conduct follow-ups to assess the effectiveness of training and development programmes on the workforce. The absence of effective evaluation approaches is also worsened by a lack of technical knowledge and skill to conduct the actual evaluation of training programmes. This problem leads to the continuous delivery of training programmes that are misaligned and not relevant in addressing the contemporary challenges faced by public sector agencies. Most of the government training units operate in silos hence exhibits disjointed efforts that do not represent public sector values and expected ethics within the workforce. The

study proved there is poor integration amongst government training institutions in the type of skills being developed. In some cases, there is duplication of functions emanating from an absence of an integrated evaluation of training and development programmes. Public sector agencies are rigid to find synergies with other departments complementing their efforts for fear of being rendered irrelevant in the future. So, most government departments have a competing mentality in training and development thus are not prepared to address gaps that may emanate from training evaluation exercise, obviously for fear of being overtaken under the public sector transformation agenda.

For training and development to be effective, the public sector needs to timeously conduct impact evaluation exercises on training and development programmes including assessing the value of training on service delivery. Training evaluation can be outsourced for it to be effective, however, the government must be committed to supporting addressing any deficiencies revealed from the evaluation exercise. Chmielewski and Phillips, (2002) emphasise that evaluation of training and development ought to support organisational growth, productivity and improve efficiencies achieved through the workforce.

Conclusion

The study established that training and development in the public sector do not follow a systematic framework that is consistent with Dessler's proposed four-stage model. However, training needs analysis is not fully comprehended thus is currently done haphazardly. The public sector agencies in low resource settings need to invest in building efficiencies in conducting training needs identification to expose the gaps essential in supporting national development plans. This can be easily achieved through strengthening the performance management system to be able to feed into training and development processes especially in the needs identification, personal career aspirations and coaching. The study results are in support of the finding of Galport and Azzam's (2017) and Holloway et al.'s (2018) studies that contend that a training needs analysis should be undertaken as a critical pillar of the evidence-based development of training and development programmes thus training needs analysis should be comprehensive and systematic.

The study established that a considerable number of government departments seem to be unaware of the other levels of training needs analysis such as, job task level, and individual level that Swanepoel et al. (2014) predicted. Despite the employees reporting having received training, several of them perceive it as not aligned with either their job profiles or their training needs. The findings have profound implications for human resources practitioners who should ensure that employee training is always designed to solve identified competency deficits. Despite, empirical studies gradually recognising the value of training evaluation this analysis did not find any indication of a systematic evaluation of training and development programmes within

the public sector departments. This could be a result of an absence of skills in practitioners involved in evaluating training, or of limited fiscal space within the public sector. Although Dessler's (2006) four-stage model clearly describe training and development as linear, the actual provision of training development in public sector departments is far from being linear.

The study established that public sector agencies poorly invest in the training and development of employees hence most sector employees occasionally receive training especially in the face of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic grossly affected the planning, implementation and evaluation of training and the overall development of the workforce as the government struggles to comply with the COVID-19 social protection guidelines. The entire public sector workforce can develop 21st-century skills by establishing mentoring programmes where individuals collaborate, share knowledge, and communicate both in-person and through written formats. Public sector entities can create career development programmes, utilising features in the technology-based learning management systems where employees gain essential skills to keep pace in contemporary workplace challenges. Accelerated efforts in expanding partnerships in the training of the workforce will support meeting long term public sector human capital development goals and envisaged outcomes.

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Chapter 9

Strategic Human Resources Management for Public Sector Entities in Zimbabwe: Needs, Scope and Possibilities



Emmanuel Tsara and Tawanda Zinyama

Abstract The chapter assesses the concept of Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) for public sector organisations in Zimbabwe. The study used documentary review and content analysis to collect and analyse the data for this chapter. The chapter made a revelation that the concept of SHRM is central in enhancing the performance of public sector organisations. It enhances the effectiveness and productivity of the organisations towards the attainment of national development goals like Vision 2030 and the National Development Strategy 1. However, the public sector is currently beset with the centralisation of HRM by the PSC, political, poor rewards and benefits and the skills deficit, corruption, and poor corporate governance. It is recommended that training and development should be done to address the skills deficit in the public sector. There should be improved pay and rewards to attract and retain skilled professionals. There is also the need to devolve the human resources functions to line management and involvement of heads of departments in the formulation and implementation of the strategic plans by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to effectively enhance the strategic alignment and strategic fit of the human resources policies and strategies to the public sector goals and objectives.

Introduction and Background

The chapter serves to understand strategic human resources management for public sector entities in Zimbabwe. Globally, strategic human resources planning has become a centrepiece in the ever-changing and complex milieu that organisations continue to face. With the fast-changing environment of the business, economic globalisation and the competition among businesses increase fierce led to the business rethink how to organise and manage the human resource (Armstrong, 2006). The operational milieu of organisations is rapidly changing thereby causing the need for organisations to adapt for sustainability and competitive advantage. Consequentially,

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SHRM aims to strategically position the organisation to enjoy a competitive advantage in terms of human capital management. The COVID-19 pandemic occasioned with the digitalisation in the fourth industrial revolution has also caused significant changes in human capital management (Aguinis et al., 2020). All these changes forced the professionals and managers to think deeply about the source of advantage of the competitive.

SHRM generally refers to the act of aligning the human resources policies, strategies and plans to the overall objectives of the organisation to create organisational consistency and congruency (Abuqayyas, 2007). Diego (2016) understands SHRM as an act of devolving the Human Resources management functions to the line managers. Bal (2011) indicates that SHRM entails the involvement of the HR managers in formulating the goals and objectives of the organisation and the implementation of the strategies. A synopsis of these definitions envisages that SHRM is about creating coherence and consistency between the organisational strategy and the human resources strategy. In other words, it is a management function that seeks to eliminate inconsistencies in the management of the human resources in the organisation. The concept of strategic HRM was first formulated by Fomburm et al. (1984), who wrote that three core elements are necessary for firms to function effectively that are mission and strategy, organisation culture, and human resource management (Armstrong, 2006). They defined strategy as a process through that the basic mission and objectives of the organisation are set, and a process through that the organisation uses its resources to achieve its objectives (Storey, 1995). Their most important conclusion is that HR systems and organisational culture would be managed in a way that is congruent with organisational strategy. In the late 1980s, Armstrong started writing more about the approach of SHRM for the management of people as compared to the traditional methods of industrial relations.

SHRM mainly focuses on the long-term objectives of the organisation. Instead of focusing on internal human resources matters, the objective is on addressing and solving the problems that affect people management in the long run and often globally (Armstrong, 2016). The primary actions of strategic human resources are to identify key HR areas where strategies can be implemented in the long run to improve the overall employee motivation and productivity. The whole concept of SHRM is predicated on the belief that HR strategies be integrated with business strategies to enhance organisational effectiveness through a strategic fit of the organisation with the whole organisational processes (Armstrong, 2006; Bal, 2011). Despite the promise and potency of SHRM in enhancing organisational effectiveness, the concept has been not explored and utilised in many public sector organisations in Africa. More precisely, in Zimbabwe, reforms to enhance the performance and productivity of the public servants have been implemented but there have not been meaningful service delivery outcomes. The culture and practice of HR management in Zimbabwe's public sector has not been conducive for the institutionalization of the culture and practice of SHRM.

The recent skills audit in Zimbabwe revealed an overall 62% critical deficit in skills and competencies that are relevant in the contemporary world (Zimbabwe National Skills Audit, 2018; Mukeredzi, 2018). This poses challenges for effectual public

service delivery and the effectiveness of the public sector in attaining national development objectives. The main focus of SHRM is to increase employee productivity by focusing on organisational obstacles that occur outside of human resources. As such, SHRM remains a beacon of hope in enhancing the effectiveness of Zimbabwe's public sector employees towards sustainable growth. Against this background, the chapter aims to assess the human capital challenges in Zimbabwe's public sector, to assess the utility of SHRM for Zimbabwe's public sector organisations, and to identify the SHRM systems and practices that are relevant to Zimbabwe's public sector.

Methodology

The study was a qualitative document analysis on Strategic Human Resources Management in the Zimbabwean public sector. It made use of academic journals, books, reviews, and academic articles. The chapter used content analysis to analyse the data gathered through documentary review. Data were arranged into themes in accordance with the research objectives. Data were presented in thematic form in line with the research objectives.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT)

The RBT is a common theory in organisational management. The theory advances that the resources of the organisation create unique value and competitive advantage for the organisation (Armstrong & Brown, 2019). The theory draws from the works of Penrose (2000) who indicates that resources are a bundle of potential services that create value to the organisation towards the competitiveness of the organisation. Boxall and Purcell (2016) indicate that the resource-based view of SHRM aims at enhancing human resources advantage and ultimately developing the strategic capability of the organisation. This is what Armstrong and Brown (2019) understood as the creation of a strategic fit that takes place between the opportunities and the resources to ensure that there is effective utilisation of the resources. Armstrong and Brown (2019) further argue that the resource-based view of the SHRM aims to create organisations that are intelligent and flexible more than their competitors through identification, hiring, and deployment of relevant talent and the skills set. Therefore, the central view of the resource-based view is to enhance the human capital of the organisation towards effective human resources management. This implies that the ability of the public sector organisations to effectively plan and manage human capital need to realize that people or human resources are critical

assets for the attainment of competitive advantage of the organisation. The theory, therefore, implies that employees in Zimbabwe's public sector are valuable assets in the public sector that are also sources of competitive advantage in the public sector.

What Is Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)?

The field of strategic HRM is still evolving and there is little agreement among scholars regarding an acceptable definition of the concept. Broadly speaking, SHRM is about systematically linking people with the organisation, more specifically, it is about the integration of HRM strategies into corporate strategies (Armstrong, 2009a, 2009b, 2013). HR strategies are essentially plans and programmes that address and solve fundamental strategic issues related to the management of human resources in an organisation (Schuler, 1992). Abuqayyas (2007) argued that strategic HRM is a complex process that is evolving and being studied and discussed by academics. It is concerned with explaining how HRM influences organisational performance.

SHRM is equated to human capital development in the assumption that people are treated as assets rather than costs and both focus on the importance of adopting an integrated and strategic approach to managing people that is the concern of all stakeholders in the organisation (Bal, 2011). This implies that SHRM in the public sector seeks to value the employees in the public sector as important assets that can create value and enhance the growth of the public sector. Storey (1995) defines SHRM as the creation of linkage or integration between the overall strategic aims of the business and the human resource strategy and implementation. The organisation's intention and how its business goal should be achieved through people. It is based on human capital, people as implementers of the strategic plan, defining where the organisation wants to go and how. A synthesis of the above definitions shows that SHRM encompasses the integration of human resource strategy and business objective and regarding people as the most important asset of an organisation. The concept tries to balance between an organisation's reasons of existence and the human resource without compromising organisational performance.

A number of scholars have argued that the concept of SHRM has evolved as a bridge between business strategy and the management of human resources (Schuller & Walker, 1990). Chaneta (2010) argued that SHRM has both vertical and horizontal dimensions in that not only HR practices are linked to the organisational strategy under strategic HRM, but practices themselves should be strategically linked to ensure that they are promoting the same goal. Its distinguishing feature is in the adoption of more macro perspectives while HRM a micro perspective. One may argue that the fact strategic HRM has emerged at all indicates there are some qualitative differences between strategic HRM and HRM. Chaneta (2010) argues that SHRM is regarded as the overarching concept that links the management and the individuals within the organisation to the business as a whole and its environment. The author then further argues that SHRM has three features that are an explicit linkage of some kind between HR policy and practices and overall organisational environment,

organisational schemas linking individual HR interventions so that they are mutually supportive and a much of human resources is discarded down the line. Overall, SHRM aims to enhance a strategic fit of the HR strategies in the public sector with the public sector goals and objectives. In other words, SHRM aims to establish coherence and cohesion between the human resources strategies and the organisational strategies for the effective performance of the public sector organisations.

According to Armstrong (2006), the resource-based approach aims at achieving a strategic fit between resources and opportunities and obtaining added value from the effective deployment of resources. For this to be successful, public-sector organisations need managers and employees who can think and plan strategically as compared to its rivals it emphasised that investment in people is of great value to the organisation. High involvement management involves treating employees as partners in the enterprise (Armstrong, 2006). Communication is the key, management and employees have continuous feedback on the mission, values, and objectives of the organisation. This strategy complements the HRM functions that were limited to make sure the outlined rules and objectives are adhered to.

Chaneta (2010) observes that many factors affect the HRM like technology, laws, social values, and economic conditions and internal factors affecting the organisations well as opportunities to achieve objectives. It is also important to understand that today's public sector organisations are faced with a daunting task to align the organisations to the ever-changing environment under that the organisations are operating. The advent of globalisation, technology, climate change, and global pandemic calls for urgent shifts and a quest for retention of talented professionals that will enable the organisation to gain a competitive advantage (Fahim, 2018). As a result, there has been a fascination with the need to enhance strategic management in public sector organisations (Fahim, 2018). SHRM becomes one of the modern concepts to manage the human capital of the organisation for sustainable competitive advantage in the organisation (Fahim, 2018; Waiganjo et al., 2012). Organisations aim to ensure that there is coherence between the organisational practices with the context in which the public sector is operating. This is done to enhance the capacity of the public sector organisation to respond to the dynamic changes that are taking place in the organisational environment each day.

Henry and Pettigrew (1986) as cited in Armstrong (2006) viewed strategic HRM to have four meanings that are the use of planning, matching HRM activities and business strategy, seeing employees as human capital, and having an integrating role. However, these meanings are embedded in the approaches of strategic HRM in achieving integration as outlined below. SHRM is unique because of its approaches to achieving the integration between human resources and business objectives. Armstrong (2006) mentioned five approaches that are the resource-based approach, strategic fit, high-performance management, high commitment management, and high involvement management. A key question to answer however is on how public sector organisations especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe benefit from implementing SHRM in the process of human capital management?

The Role of Strategic Human Resources Management in the Public Sector

The role of SHRM is to set objectives that must accurately reflect the strategic objectives and values of the organisation, Schuler and Jackson (1992) indicated that organisations can improve their environment for success by choosing HR planning, staffing, appraisal, compensation, training, and development and labour relations that are consistent with and support corporate strategy. The means that HR objectives, policies, and plans must be integrated with the organisation's strategic business. When this happens, HRM becomes a true business partner in boosting the organisation's competitive advantage by helping achieve strategic objectives and employee growth. Chaneta (2010) argued that strategic HRM must be in harmony with the organisation's overall aims. HRM has a role to support the achievement of these objectives.

SHRM benefits the HRM managers through devolvement of the human resource practices to line managers. This will make HR managers more available for participation in strategic decision-making processes. Budhwar and Khatri (2001) argued that the responsibility of routine execution and administration of human resources practices should be delegated to line managers (head of departments in the public sector) as they have a direct effect and contact with employees and a capacity to understand and respond quickly to employees. Brewster (1991) added that devolvement includes the involvement of line managers (heads of departments) in the execution and administration of human resources practices such as performance assessment, recruitment, and selection. This will therefore increase the contact between HRM and line managers in understanding front-line business problems. A critical question to this is how far can Zimbabwe's public sector organisations be able to devolve HR functions to the head of departments to institutionalize the practice of SHRM? The chapter is an attempt to understand the challenges and opportunities of SHRM in Zimbabwe's public sector organisations. It aims to establish context-specific ways on how the organisations can benefit from the modern practice in human capital management.

SHRM emerged as a result of the emphasis on HRM to become an integral part of the organisational strategy (Hall et al., 2007). The need for strategic HRM was seen as a requirement to fill the gap that HRM alone could not fill. In the public sector, the public sector is characterised by being labour-intensive and is one of the biggest employers (Knies et al. 2017). This implies that effective and efficient delivery of public goods and services is contingent on the ability of the public employees to effectively function through aligning the HR policies and strategies to the overall organisational strategy. For many years, however, the concept of SHRM has been more pronounced in private sector organisations leaving out the public sector regardless of the role it plays in national socio-economic development (Ongaro & Thiel, 2017; Knies et al. 2017). This is from the realization that the public sector plays a key role in driving national development through the services that the public sector employees undertake. Knies et al. (2017) argue that the well-being of the country,

and the quality of services in the country, are attributed to the performance of public sector employees.

SHRM helps in the integration of the HRM with the organisation's strategies. Integration is defined as the involvement of HRM in the formulation and implementation of organisational strategies and the alignment of HRM with the strategic needs of an organisation. Armstrong (2006) agreed with Schuller and Jackson in that, integration helps the organisation to integrate HRM issues into strategic plans to ensure coherence into various HRM aspects. SHRM is about getting the strategy of the organisation implemented effectively. The meaning of SHRM is to get everybody from the top of the organisation to the bottom doing things that make the organisation successful. In other words, it attempts to coordinate efforts of employees in the public sector organisation towards organisational cohesion and effectiveness. More specifically, effective delivery of public goods and services owes much to the need by the organisation to align the overall strategy of the organisation with the HR strategy. This is from the realization that people in an organisation are the most important assets that require effective coordination and management. The arguments from these scholars indicate that strategic HRM is concerned with adoption and integration. If HRM issues are integrated into strategic plans of the organisation that HR managers will incorporate HRM points of view in their decision making. Integration helps in decision-making alongside their senior managers. Human resources goals, objectives, and practices will be aligned with the organisation's objectives.

Further, SHRM may lead to the change of culture and structure of an organisation. Chaneta (2010) posed a question that 'does the nature of an organisation's structure hinder or assist the proposed business strategy or does the strategies themselves determine the appropriate structure of the organisation. Current initiatives of enterprises, organisational reviews, and imperatives for more effective and efficient production seem to suggest that the strategies are changing the natural organisational structure. Beer et al. (1984) argued that the drive towards improved productivity and efficiency in any organisation's strategies has involved the removal of middle management levels and an increase in the management span of control. The changes have an effect on organisational behaviour and significant HR functions for example recruitment and selection.

Human resources managers can gain knowledge from the philosophy of strategic management on treating employees. According to Armstrong (2006), the concept of regarding people as assets was first coined by Beer et al. (1984). They are now human capital other than a cost to the organisation. This augurs well with Abuqayyas (2007) who equated strategic HRM and human capital as development as the same thing. Lawler argued that an organisation that is true about human capital would develop executives who practice shared leadership throughout their organisation.

Strategic Human Resources Management in the Zimbabwean Public Sector

The role of the public sector in enhancing national socio-economic development in Zimbabwe cannot be over-emphasised. The public sector occupies a strategic role in driving national development in the country. However, public-sector employees (human capital) are key elements that determine the performance of the public sector towards national socio-economic development. This implies that there is a need for retention of the staff that is skilled and well-aligned to the public sector goals and objectives to see through improved performance in the sector. In the long run, the country aims to achieve an upper-middle-income economy by 2030. This envisages a long-term national development vision for the country under that public sector organisations contribute this vision. Further, the National Development strategy 1 (2021–2025) aims to enhance human capital development and innovation as key drivers for the development of the country (Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1, 2020). The overall objective is to ensure that there is the development of skilled and highly motivated professionals who can improve the performance of Zimbabwe's public sector.

Public sector employees are currently seized with the challenges of poor salaries coupled with limited disposable income resulting from mounting inflation and macroeconomic stagnation. This has triggered the mass exodus of many skilled and talented professionals from the countries in search of greener pastures in neighbouring countries and the developed world. Individuals that flee the country in search of greener pastures are doctors, financial experts, engineers, and agricultural experts (Mavhunga, 2019). This implies that the public sector needs to proactively plan for the manpower demands of the public sector organisations to address the issue of talent flight so that it retains and recruits talented and skilled professionals necessary to enhance the attainment of the national development goals in the country. As such, the concept of SHRM becomes relevant in enhancing the HR planning of the public sector employees so that they effectively deal with the challenges faced in terms of human capital management. Employee motivation through rewards and benefits is one of the HR strategies that can be harnessed through SHRM to retain and attract skills and talent in the public sector.

However, these national development aspirations are taking place in a country that already grappling with a huge 62% skills deficit (Mukeredzi, 2018; National Skills Audit, 2018). The National Skills Audit (2018) revealed that there is a 5% availability of skills in the health sciences (indicating a 95% deficit), 12% availability in Agriculture (indicating an 88% deficit), and a 10% availability in engineering (indicating a 90% deficit). This generally implies that strategic management has been missing in recruitment and selection and overall HR planning in the public sector. The skills deficit implies that there is a mismatch between the education system and the relevant skills that are needed at the moment. Zimbabwe is one of the African countries to be celebrated for having a high literacy rate above 90% yet there

is a critical shortage of the relevant skills in the country (Mukeredzi, 2018; Ngara, 2017).

The concept of SHRM emphasises the need for organisations to develop HRM strategies that develop the workforce of their human capital so that they are competitive in the world. The concept of SHRM alludes that HRM practices should be integrated with the overall strategic planning that takes into cognizance the endogenous and the exogenous contexts so that public sector organisations proactively plan for the future manpower demands and make strategic action to gain competitive advantage (Armstrong, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Against this background, the Public Service Commission had a strategic plan for 2019–2020 to ensure that efforts are gathered towards addressing the challenges besetting the public sector in the country. The PSC has already begun to work on the plans to introduce the Public Service Academy (PSA) as an institution to train and develop the civil servants towards the attainment of strategic vision and goals of the country. What is important at the end of the day is the ability of the academy to train and develop public servants on various skills and competencies that are relevant for national development. This is so because the public sector is big and requires different skills set and competencies for the effective performance of human capital.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) and Strategic Human Resources Management

The PSC is the national organ of government that presides over the management and planning of national human capital issues of the country. It functions to ensure that ministries, government departments, and agencies can effectively plan and implement their roles and responsibilities (Public Service Commission Strategic Plan (PSCSP) 2019–2020). The commission is faced with the need to ensure that there is effective planning and management to achieve the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS 1) of 2021–2025 and Vision 2030. Among other issues, the PSC indicated in the PSCSP (2019–2020) that there is a need for a pay and benefits reform, effective talent and reward management, skills development and management, and risk management and governance. This was from the realization that the strategic objectives of the government of attaining Vision 2030 could not be attained without the alignment of the necessary skills and competencies to re-invigorate the performance of the public service. This implies that the PSC has a daunting task to strategically plan and manage the public service as the main institution responsible for human capital development. Under the concept of SHRM, this implies that the PSC has a fiduciary duty to engage and devolve responsibility to the heads of departments and line ministries in different government agencies and ministries to ensure that there is effective coordination and collaboration in human capital management. However, the workforce challenges in Zimbabwe's public sector envisages limited application of the SHRM concepts. A cardinal question that rises is why the public sector presents a stark absence of

SHRM concepts and practices in praxis despite its recognition as a principle for human capital transformation in the twenty-first century?

Numerous factors could be put forward to explain why SHRM appears to be missing in public service human capital management. Gore (2016) is of the view that there is poor management response to the employee issues and concerns in the public sector organisations that demotivates employees in the public sector. In addition to this, the bureaucratic management of the public sector creates a centralized HR management under the Public Service Commission (PSC) that more often excludes the HR in public sector organisations in the formulation and implementation of HR policies and strategies for the public sector (Gore, 2016). This implies that Heads of departments (line managers) are not involved in the formulation of salaries and benefit structures for the employees in the public sector. This is to say, while there is a recognition that there is a need for competitive pay and benefit in the public sector, the practice is centrally driven with little or no initiatives from the line managers. This does not conform to the practice of SHRM as the line managers and shop-floor employees should be involved in the planning and implementation of HR policies and strategies.

As a result, the salaries and benefits structures are centralized, rigid, and do not take into consideration the concerns of the employees in public sector organisations. The concept of SHRM however provides that there has to be devolvement of the HR functions to the line management (Heads of Departments) to ensure that there is buy-in and strategic fit between the HR strategies and the organisational strategy (Armstrong, 2010; Bal, 2011). Mashavave (2017) further observes that the public sector is fused with political interference in the appointment and removal of the Board of Directors as a result of the change on the minister of the public entity. This undermines the ability of public sector organisations to effectively align strategic plans to HR strategies. Many times, employees are recruited based on political connections and social networks regardless of having requisite qualifications for that. This results in the poor performance of the employees and ultimately affects the ability to effectively benefit from the SHRM concept. As such, the efficacy of SHRM is not realized in this case. This misalignment of the HR policies and strategies to the employees' needs creates a challenge towards effective employee motivation in the public sector.

The recurrence of highly publicised corruptions and poor corporate governance in Zimbabwe's public sector negatively impacts effective HR management towards the performance of the public sector organisations. Most public sector entities have been characterised by poor governance practices that undermine effective HR planning and management towards the productivity of the employees (Chigudu, 2020; Mashavave, 2017). Mashavave (2017) further observes that there has been limited transparency and accountability on the part of the management in some public entities. Top leaders have also been seen to be selfish and corrupt as recent salaries scandals at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and the Premier Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) (Chigudu, 2020). This happens when the HR managers seem to be complicit with bad governance in public entities that ultimately undermines the effectiveness of SRHM as a concept and practice in public sector organisations. These to

a large extent affect effective HR Management as the employees are left demotivated that ultimately affects their performance at the organisation. The concept of SHRM indicates that employees should be treated as vital assets of the organisation that implies the ability of the management to motivate and enhance the performance of employees in the public sector (Armstrong, 2016). This is taking place at the juncture where there is a need to treat the employees of the organisation as assets who can enhance the strategic fit and alignment between the HR systems and practices with the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Public Sector Values Versus SHRM Principles

It is imperative to understand that the concept of SHRM has compatibility challenges with the values and goals of public sector organisations. Diego (2016) observes that the concept of SHRM has been more associated with the private sector organisations where the value is to ensure that the organisation achieves sustainable competitive advantage. This is different with public sector organisations as they do not aim to compete with other public sector organisations but ensure that there is the effectiveness of the public sector in delivering public goods and services. This is to say, the concept of SHRM emphasises the devolvement of HR functions and responsibilities to the line managers and to ensure that the ‘shop-floor employees are involved in the formulation and implementation of the organisational strategy. This aims to ensure a strategic fit between the organisation’s internal environment with its external environment. However, the centralized and bureaucratic nature of the public sector that is usually manned in political circles presents challenges towards the compatibility of the concept of SHRM. The core question is how best can public sector organisations benefit from the concept of SHRM?

The values and structure of public sector organisations could be stumbling blocks towards the utilisation of the SHRM concept. This, however, does not render SHRM useless in public sector management for effective human capital management and improved service delivery. Diego (2016) observes that the public sector organisations in Zimbabwe can benefit from the concept of SHRM through the ability of the organisations to enhance organisational flexibility in their approach to employee management and engagement. Specifically, employees can report directly to their respective heads of departments than to the HR manager on issues that are related to the HR functions. Flexibility in the approach to managing employees also implies inclusivity in the way employees are engaged and managed. For instance, employees should be allowed to initiate and implement initiatives in the organisation and come up with initiatives on how best the human capital can better perform. This soft approach to HRM can change the approach and culture of public sector organisations towards the realization of the benefits of SHRM in human capital management in the public sector.

The COVID-19 and SHRM in the Public Sector

The COVID-19 pandemic is another challenge that is an albatross to the performance of the public sector through inducing a reduction in pay and retrenchment of some public employees. Further, the onset of the pandemic has also led to the demand for new skills and competencies from the public sector employees so that they can effectively cope up with the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) (2021) unearthed that the COVID-19 pandemic had heavily impacted the health delivery system in the country that was already incapacitated and underfunded prior to the onset of the pandemic. Frontline health workers have embarked on several strikes calling for incapacitation due to meagre salaries, lack of equipment, and essentials (Cassim, 2020; ZPP, 2021). This evidence put together demonstrates capacity challenges that currently beset the public sector in the country towards effective health service delivery. This implies that bold actions are needed to ensure that adequate and relevant human resources for health are available to deal with the HR demands in the era of COVID-19. The desire to address the impact of the COVID-19 should be lined up with the necessary skilled professionals who have the necessary skills and competencies needed to ensure that the public sector organisations in the country are competing in the global economy. From the concept of SHRM, there is a need for HR strategies that enhance the strategic fit of the organisation in the business environment (Armstrong, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). This implies that HR strategies for public sector organisations in the public sector should ensure that necessary HR strategies have been lined up to enhance the effectiveness of HR in addressing challenges posed with the COVID-19 on the performance of public sector organisations.

Public sector employees are now expected to work from home in compliance with the COVID-19 regulations. This implies that digital skills are no longer an option but a prerequisite for effective employee performance during this era. This is required at the point where the country is battling with a deficit in digital skills relevant to strategically responding to the external threats and challenges affecting the performance of public sector organisations (Mukeredzi, 2018). It is of paramount significance for the management and policy practitioners to create synergies between the public sector vision, goals, and objectives to the HR strategies to create coherence and cohesion between the two. The concept of SHRM seeks to strategically align the right individuals through empowering heads of departments (line managers) to be involved in the creation and implementation of the HR strategies. This implies that head heads of departments in the public sector should have an understanding of the overall digital skills needs for the Zimbabwean public sector organisations and the skills needs and deficits that the public sector organisations have in the country.

Discussion

The chapter aimed at understanding the concept of SHRM in the context of the Zimbabwean public sector. Through a critical review of literature, the chapter observes that the public sector terrain is manned with multiple debacles that relentlessly undermine effective employee management. Highly centralized HR management systems, political interference, poor management response, and poor corporate governance are major issues that undermine effective human capital management. Centralization of HR management through the PSC undermines the ability of the public sector organisations to devolve the HR functions and responsibilities to the line managers. Consequently, HR strategies and policies will not be driven by the employees and line managers but rather from a centralized system. The RBT on the other hand emphasises the need to treat the employees of the organisation as human capital or valuable assets as they are sources of competitive advantage. It logically follows that the failure to devolve the HR functions to the line managers (Heads of Departments) by the PSC negates the opportunity of the public sector organisations to benefit from the improved communication and overall flexibility in the organisation through SHRM. As such, there is a need to ensure that highly centralized HR management systems are removed to pave way for a flexible approach in managing human capital to create a competitive advantage for the public sector organisations.

Through the review of literature, the chapter made a revelation that the macro-economic conditions that have tenaciously undermined economic development in the country have significantly undermined the ability of the public sector organisations to effectively harness the concept of SHRM for improved service delivery. This has resulted in the migration of skilled and talented workforce from the country to other countries in search of greener pastures. The country is also suffering from a huge deficit in terms of critical skills that are relevant in the public sector. This is also intensified with the covid-19 pandemic that has called for the need for new skills set to cope up with the pandemic. This reveals that the concept of SHRM has been a missing factor in the management of the public sector. The resource-based theory assumes that the organisation should treat employees as the most valuable resources in the organisation that create a source of competitive advantage. As such, it implies that more investment is needed in the public sector employees to enhance competitive advantage. However, the concept of competitive advantage in the public sector organisations is achieved in the sense of improved service delivery and responsiveness of the public sector to the needs and aspirations of the public. This is so as the public sector at times does not compete with other public sector organisations but seek to cherish the values of effectiveness and organisational responsiveness. This implies that the practice of HR management should at all costs try to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of public sector organisations towards the effectiveness of the public sector organisation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The chapter concludes that the concept of SHRM is relevant and has the potential to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of public sector organisations. Zimbabwe's public sector organisations are faced with a critical skills gap to effectively drive the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisations. This has taken place at the time HRM practices in the public sector have not been utilising effectively the concept of SHRM. The chapter concludes that the reason for this could be the centralization of HRM through the PSC that at times does not allow heads of department and public servants to participate in the formulation and implementation of strategic HR decisions in the public sector. Political interferences and poor governance practices are also challenges that have undermined the effectiveness of utilising SHRM in Zimbabwe's public sector. There are numerous strategies that policymakers and public sector organisations can pursue to effectively benefit from the concept of SHRM. These include:

- i. Training and Development of employees in the public sector. The RBT proposes that human resources are the most vital resources of the organisation that creates a competitive advantage in the organisation. As such, investing in training and development will ensure that the public sector workers have the needed skills and competencies relevant to enhance national socio-economic development. It will also address the current 62% overall skills deficit that is in the country that altogether contributes to the national development agenda.
- ii. Improving the pay and benefits of the public sector employees. There is a need to improve the pay and benefits of public sector employees to ensure that there is no further skills flight from the public sector. The salaries and benefits should also be favourable to attract talent from both the country and abroad for effective development of the public sector.
- iii. Devolvement of HRM functions and responsibilities to heads of departments in the public sector. The PSC should remain a player at the policy level to coordinate human capital planning in the public sector but much responsibility should be in the line management who are directly interacting with the human capital and have direct experience in the management of the organisation.
- iv. Inclusion of the employees and the heads of department in the formulation of strategic plans for public sector employees to ensure that there is coherence, by-in, and strategic fit of the organisational plans and the HR strategies.
- v. There is a need to fight corruption and bad corporate governance to plug the gaps in public sector governance. Rewards and benefits should be tied to performance and should be reasonable between the top executives and the employees. This attempts to address the challenge of executive overcompensation leaving out employees demotivated undermining performance in the public sector.

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Chapter 10

Addressing Workforce Public Productivity Through Human Resources Outsourcing



Tawanda Nyikadzino , Caroline Muronza, and Tambudzayi Rashirayi

Abstract Human resources outsourcing, a process whereby human resources management functions are contracted to outside players, has gained popularity as a reform strategy that allows the human resources department to focus more on strategic change management functions. Effective human resources management is needed to create an effective, professional and responsive public machinery that makes a significant contribution to the achievement of national development goals. The study sought to discuss the extent to that human resources outsourcing strategy address productivity challenges in the Zimbabwe public sector in general. Using qualitative desk research and documentary analysis, the study revealed that, despite the widely heralded benefits of human resources outsourcing, its uptake in Zimbabwe's public service remains low. Human resources functions are highly centralised leading to unnecessary bureaucratic delays in the implementation of human resources management functions. Therefore, outsourcing of recruitment and selection functions can increase the chances of attracting the best talent from the market, hence likely to attract high performing and productive workforce teams. The research findings support the claim that the public sector on its own may not be able to pool a highly-skilled workforce due to the poor image associated with working conditions within the public service. The study concludes that the public sector needs to compete with the private sector in building relevant modern skills hence outsourcing of human resources functions like auditing, workforce planning training and development, though expensive, proves effective in bringing a culture transfer into the public service mechanism. The research recommends the need for the public sector to introduce a deliberate policy of mandatory outsourcing of human resources functions when appointing high-level grades. In addition, the public sector needs to

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build strong public–private partnerships in building and implementing outsourcing functions within the public sector. However, the collaborations may need a strong budget commitment from the Treasury to support a highly productive public sector workforce.

Introduction

For nearly four decades, New Public Management (NPM) proponents have criticised traditional public sector management styles for entrenching monopolistic tendencies, hierarchical and unresponsive bureaucracies, and structural and managerial intransigence (Battaglio & Ledvinka, 2009). The productivity and service delivery challenges associated with traditional public administration practices across the globe have triggered the implementation of several public sector management reforms emphasising the rolling back of the frontiers of the State. Through the NPM paradigm, public sector organisations have been urged to model their *modus operandi* in line with private sector market-driven styles. Consequently, governments worldwide have, in one way or the other, reinvented their public machinery through, among others, decentralisation, privatisation, deregulation, commercialisation, public–private partnerships, and outsourcing. Emphasis was placed on the utilisation of management and service delivery strategies applied in the private sector. Reformers hoped that, through such structural changes, quality service delivery, cost-saving, citizen participation, transparency, value for money, and effective policy implementation will be enhanced (Battaglio & Ledvinka, 2009; Nyikadzino & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). In addition, NPM proponents contend that accountability and responsiveness will be enhanced through greater operational autonomy and expanded decision space.

The public service has not been spared by such reforms, given its central role in the public management discourse (Lamidi et al., 2016). As Battaglio and Ledvinka (2009: 294) rightfully point out, “traditional civil service systems, based on merit and neutral competence, have frequently been criticized for their intractability, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness”. Questioning the efficacy and sustainability of centralised public personnel management systems (Lamidi et al., 2016; Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010), civil service reformers have engaged in a massive drive towards dismantling traditional human resources management structures, systems and cultures (Anazodo et al., 2012; Marwa & Zairi, 2009). Underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity, the motive behind these civil service reforms is to decentralise, deregulate human resources management functions, and foster greater managerial decision space over human resources processes. The trend coincided with the Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM) drive that emphasises the diffusion of human resources functions to line managers and other actors outside of the organisation (Armstrong, 2001). The main aim is to prune human resources functions and allow the human resources department to focus more on strategic roles. As Abdul-Halim, Ee, Ramayah and Ahmad (2014) aver, the role of the Human Resources (HR) departments is no

longer limited to just executing administrative work, they are now strategic business partners actively involved in assisting organisations to formulate, implement and competitively sustain strategic plans.

With the purpose to free the HR department to focus more on strategic roles and achieve greater flexibility in discharging HR functions, public and private organisations in the developed and developing world have tended to restructure their HR systems and structures through human resources outsourcing (HRO) (Gottardello & Valverde, 2018). The thesis of HRO derives from the transactional cost theory that prescribes that organisations should “select the governance form, from the various alternatives amongst the organisational menu, that minimizes transaction and production costs” (Martins et al., 2010: 8). Such a restructuring process is critical given the central role of the HR function. As Igbinomwanhia et al. (2013: 52) succinctly argue,

The human resource function is one of the most critical assets of an organisation. The extent to that an organisation can realise its goals depends, largely, on its ability to attract, develop, maintain, and retain the right quality and quantity of human resource (HR) capital.

Subsequently, the enduring organisational efforts to improve services to employees, reduce administrative costs, and focus on issues of strategic importance to the organisation triggered the implementation of HRO (Abdul-Halim et al., 2014). Indeed, the literature indicates that HRO restructures the HR department, refocuses HR functions and redeploys resources (Gottardello & Valverde, 2018; Igbinomwanhia et al., 2013), allowing organisations to ‘make more by doing less’ (Gilley & Rasheed, 2000 cited in Abdul-Halim et al., 2014). According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2009) Survey Report cited in Igbinomwanhia, Iyayi and Iyayi (2013: 54), several non-core HR functions such as, among others, HR planning, appraisal strategy, employee relations, information systems, outplacement, compensation benefits, employee assistance, recruitment and selection, training, pensions, payroll, and legal are being outsourced or considered for outsourcing. It is argued that, through HRO of non-core functions, organisations will be strategically positioned to access new technologies, specialised knowledge, skills and abilities, improved service quality, and reap the other benefits associated with economies of scale and specialisation in the outsourced HR functions (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2013; Saha, 2005).

However, notwithstanding the widely heralded benefits of HRO, literature is scarce on its utilisation in Africa’s public organisations. The limited available literature points to the low uptake of HRO in the public sector compared to the private counterpart (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015; Suleman & Samuel, 2019). Suleman and Samuel (2019) argue that although HRO in the public sector has been widely implemented in some developed countries, in Africa it appears to be a new phenomenon. Human resources functions remain centralised although public organisations are increasingly under pressure to address productive challenges stemming from administrative inefficiencies and human resources rigidity. Zimbabwe is not an exception. A review of the Zimbabwean experience indicates that HR functions are largely under the control of traditional and centralised commissions and boards, such as, among other, the Civil Service Commission, Judicial Service Commission; Health Service Board

and the Local Government Board (Chimbari et al., 2008; Sect. 203 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013).

The centralisation of the HR function has not been without challenges. Due to the centralisation of HR functions, public organisations struggle to timeously fill strategic posts, flexibly motivate their employees and discharge other HR functions in general. In the health sector, for instance, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare was operating with an average vacancy rate of 81% among the senior positions (Nyazema, 2010). Strikes also became the order of the day due to motivational challenges (Reuters Staff, 2020). The same challenges are also obtained in the local government policy field. Some local authorities, for example, the Harare, Gweru, Chitungwiza, Mutare and Bulawayo have operated without substantive senior managers for some time (Harare Residents Trust, 2020; Open Council, 2021; Matenga, 2021). Subsequently, productive levels in Zimbabwe's public sector have been significantly compromised. Against this background, this chapter makes a case that the outsourcing of HR functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, job evaluation, among others, can help in addressing some of the productive challenges that have characterised Zimbabwe's public organisation.

Conceptual Clarification

For several years, HRO has been part of the SHRM reform agenda for many countries. The search for strategies that reduce HR operating costs and address human resources productive challenges has become a top priority for civil service reformers (Saha, 2005). As Battaglio and Ledvinka (2009) state, reformers antithetical to centralised traditional personnel management practices have advocated for the adoption of private market-like styles, such as HRO. HRO has, however, been defined in many ways with different motives. To tell the story on addressing workforce public productivity through HRO with clarity, this chapter defines HRO. This is important given that HRO goes by different names and is often confused with the devolution of HR functions (Uma et al., 2018). In defining HRO, Tremblay and Patry (2008) argue that it is a process of contracting out specific organisational activities to external competent personnel with capabilities that the organisation is devoid of but essential for its operations. Similarly, Tian (2007: 55) views HRO as "the purchasing by an organisation of ongoing HR services from a third-party provider that it would otherwise normally provide for itself." Battaglio and Ledvinka (2009) refer to it as the privatisation of HR functions. According to Reed (2001), HRO is the diffusion of some of the HR functions of an organisation to a provider outside the organisation itself. A common thread linking the preceding conceptions shows that HRO, in line with the transactional theory, entails purchasing HR functions that can be cheaply, efficiently and effectively provided by the market.

The functions outsourced significantly vary from one organisation to another. Stasiulytė (2011) highlights that HRO started with activities such as payment of pensions, calculation of salaries, transfer of employees, motivation systems creation,

instructions and development of employees' services offering. In the contemporary business world, there has been an increase in outsourced HR functions or those considered for outsourcing. The following are some of the commonly outsourced HR functions:

- “staff training and developing, organising the programmes, research of training need;
- Search and selection of staff and its competence investigation, negotiations;
- calculating of work salary, compensations, motivation programmes;
- reorganising and firing of staff, employees' dismissal conversations;
- employees' health and industrial safety” (Stasiulytė, 2011: 118; Uma et al., 2018)

Several arguments have been advanced in favour of HRO. Its rationale, however, largely mirrors more the general arguments for the privatisation of public goods and services. One of the arguments advanced in literature is that the outsourcing of mundane HR functions frees up the HR department to focus more on strategic functions (Coggburn, 2007). According to Armstrong (2001), the HR department is now regarded as a business partner and as such is expected to focus on strategic functions such as change management and organisational development. It is also argued that the privatisation of HR functions reduces public expenditures (Battaglio & Ledvinka, 2009; Uma et al., 2018). The majority of organisations outsourcing HR functions and activities to external specialists reduce labour costs by avoiding employing all-day HR personnel (Stasiulytė, 2011). Battaglio and Ledvinka (2009: 296) contend that “cost savings will ensue once the public sector opts for private sector service delivery.” High public service employment costs have compromised the implementation of capital projects as the heavy wage bill gobbles the limited available resources.

Additionally, given the dearth of HR management competencies in the public sector, HRO brings in specialists from the private counterpart (Meier & Krause, 2005; Stasiulytė, 2011). Through having the “right kind of people, doing the right kind of things always at the right time” (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2013), HRO enhances productivity and helps public organisations to deliver quality goods and services at competitive prices. Thus, HRO has been justified on grounds of enabling the public organisation to tap into the specialised capabilities of the external personnel (Klaas et al., 2001) with other economic and strategic benefits (Belcourt, 2006). HRO is, therefore, key in ensuring the productivity of an organisation. In support of the perceived benefits of HRO, Lee et al., (2019: 973) argue, “outsourcing is an important policy tool employed in the name of greater efficiency and a decided preference for business-like practices”. Saha (2005) summarises the strategic drivers of HRO as follows: improved overall organisational performance; sharpened business focus; improved access to external skills; improved quality and efficiency of outsourced process; and creation of new revenue sources. A survey on the drivers for HRO by CIPD (2009) highlighted that the top three reasons for undertaking HRO are access to skills and knowledge (71%), quality (64%), and cost reduction (61%).

Despite the preceding benefits, HRO, like any other reform, is not without risks. Coggburn (2007) argue that, in some instances, HRO may not produce the cost-saving

dividends that literature suggests. The other line of argument suggests that HRO in a complex public sector context may come with information and coordination costs (Meier & Krause, 2005; Uma et al., 2018). Furthermore, Lawler et al. (2004) cited in Battaglio and Ledvinka (2009) highlight the potential for losses in expertise and knowledge management. This is due to the increased reliance of the HR department on vendors to pick up critical skills and abilities. Poor vendor services can potentially tarnish the image of public organisations thereby compromising public trust (Meier & Krause, 2005). In line with the preceding argument, HRO reforms may interrupt service delivery if they detract from essential competencies such as performance management, motivation and employee relations (Battaglio & Ledvinka, 2009). Moreover, the clamour for eye-catching government contracts risks creating fertile grounds for corruption, political patronage, and nepotism, among other unethical underhand dealings (Coggburn, 2007). Literature has not adequately discussed the separation of core and non-core. Given this lack of clarity, organisations risk outsourcing core functions, and subsequently losing business survival supremacy in the long run (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2013). Igbinomwanhia et al. (2013) further indicate that HRO is associated with dependency, cultural, operational and contractual risks. Deliberations on whether to produce HR services in-house or outsource should consider these factors.

Human Resources Outsourcing and Public Workforce Productivity Internationally

Public sector institutions worldwide have undergone and are still undergoing NPM-driven reforms. Osborne and Gabler (1992) perceive NPM reforms as a panacea for improved organisational productivity and efficiency. According to Gottardello and Valverde (2018), HRO has found its place in contemporary management with mixed uptake results. Experiences from Hong Kong, Nigeria and South Africa illustrate mixed results attained from implementing HRO (Vintar & Stanimirovic, 2021). Established from these experiences is the potential that HRO has in transforming organisational productivity. Despite the implementation challenges, HRO remains an important strategy that, if properly implemented, transforms productivity in the public sector (Vintar & Stanimirovic, 2021).

In Hong Kong, as Al-Nuseirat and Biygautane (2014) assert, the government is responsible for the identification of civil servants' skills deficiencies and ensuring that civil service employees are equipped with adequate and relevant skills and expertise for the success of the public sector. In this endeavour, Hong Kong has embraced market-oriented mechanisms to enhance public sector productivity and efficiency. As was the case in many countries, Hong Kong had centralised HR functions. For instance, public service training was centralised under the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) established in 1996 (Vyas, 2019). The CSTDI,

however, was found wanting in the area of information technology. It lacked technologically equipped personnel for implementing online training. To address this skills gap, the Republic of Hong Kong has embraced HRO with emphasis on those training programmes that involve information technology. This move has resulted in the CSTDI becoming more of a procurer rather than a trainer. In the era of modernisation, the public sector in Hong Kong outsourced the training function to esteemed institutions that could facilitate training online thus empowering the workforce with new skills and expertise on flexible and cost-effective terms (Hosseini et al., 2014).

The outsourcing of training services in Hong Kong yielded remarkable positive learning outcomes. Flexible learning opportunities were provided to the public service employees who managed to make the most of these opportunities (Hosseini et al. 2014). The skills and competencies attained during the training programmes were valued as resources for increased effective and efficient service provision and workforce performance (Vyas, 2019). Moreover, the training services were tailor-made to meet the needs of specific jobs thus making them relevant and effective. The outsourced training services were, however, deficient in addressing social and political environments that are volatile. Such deficiencies hinder effective workforce performance to handle the ever-changing environment. Furthermore, external suppliers of the training function have not been able to cater for the communication skills, public and media relations skills, skills critical in modern-day governance (Vyas, 2019). The Hong Kong experience revealed the failure of the decentralised training in achieving the expected results. This is attributable to the lack of funds by the public departments to engage top-notch human resources suppliers.

In the context of Nigeria, budget deficits, organisational inefficiencies and ineptitude operations, that have slowed and hindered the achievement of public sector goals, triggered the implementation of civil service reforms (Suleman & Samuel, 2019). To remedy the situation, various strategies were adopted with the first one being privatisation. Privatisation managed to address some of these challenges but not all public sector organisations were subjected to this strategy. Some public sector organisations resorted to HRO as a panacea to address the entrenched organisational performance challenges (Sang, 2010). In Nigeria, the Federal Government's outsourcing policy supported and articulated the specific activities that public organisations ought to contract out that included, cleaning, catering services, security and messengers (Ikeje & Nwaoma, 2015).

Suleman and Samuel (2019) argue that, since the introduction of the HRO policy, most public sector. The implementation of HRO in Nigeria has been applauded for allowing public sector organisations to focus their energies and attention on their core mandates thus translating them to goal-oriented entities that position the organisation for efficiency and cost reduction (Manisha & Deepa, 2011; Okorie, 2010). Costs reduction enables public organisations to utilise the saved revenue for other important projects that will enhance the livelihoods of citizens. The provision of quality products and services has been an HRO outcome in Nigeria that has resulted in enhanced accountability and consumer satisfaction (Fapohunda, 2013).

The Nigerian HRO experience has also produced negative outcomes that policy-makers should consider in improving the performance of further related reforms. As

Suleman and Samuel (2019) observe, the contract workers provided by the external supplier are less committed and dedicated compared to the permanent employees who have their energies invested in the public sector. Having a workforce invested in the operations of the organisation enhances productivity and ensures the smooth functioning of the organisation that could be lacking where the workforce is detached from the organisation. Moreover, Ikeije and Nwaoma (2015) cited in Suleman and Samuel (2019) argue that HRO outsourcing in Higher learning institutions has created hostility with the community where existing staff is laid off and replaced with an external service supplier. This poses a strategic threat to the organisation, as the organisation's move to implement HRO failed to uphold social corporate responsibility. Such a move would further deepen poverty and inequalities through retrenchments.

HRO and Productive Challenges in Zimbabwe's Public Sector

Despite the popularity of HRO in literature, its uptake in Zimbabwe remains very low. HRO literature in Zimbabwe's public sector is scarce. The available literature points to the centralisation of the HR function (Chigwata, 2018; ReBuild Consortium, 2016). The establishment of centralised HRM commissions and boards has significantly hampered innovation, responsiveness, creativity and productivity in the public sector. Cases in point are the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Local Government Board (LGB) and Health Services Board (HSB), to mention but a few. Human resource productivity challenges stemming from the high centralisation of HR functions, however, overwhelm Zimbabwe's public sector. In the local government sector, through the LGB, the central government controls senior management employment decisions at the local government level. According to the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29: 15), the LGB, composed of central government appointees, is responsible for the appointment of senior administrative positions in local authorities. The LGB involvement in local government HR affairs created a centralised process compromising effective human resources management (Chigwata, 2018). It took over local government personnel powers, in the process creating HR responsive challenges.

Due to centralisation, the LGB became a giant elephant with clay feet. The centralisation of personnel powers in the hands of the LGB has created bureaucratic pathologies that have delayed the filling of key administrative positions in many urban councils. Consequently, local authorities, for instance, Chitungwiza, Harare, Gweru, Bulawayo and Mutare operated without substantive for some time (Matenga, 2021). The Harare Residents Trust (2020) revealed that, in the Harare City Council, officials with acting mandates occupy the human capital director, finance director, chamber secretary, and water director positions. Similarly, the Chitungwiza Municipality has operated for nearly three years without a Town Clerk (Open Council 2021). The dominance of acting officials at management posts poses an existential corporate

governance and service delivery threat. It also creates a conducive corruption environment because acting officials be lured into wayward decisions expecting favours from the councillors. The lacklustre performance of the LGB in filling vacant posts resulted in local government productivity and service delivery challenges. All these operational challenges show weaknesses inherent in the centralised HRM system. The policymakers in the local government field should consider outsourcing the recruitment of senior management posts to private players. Private HR specialists can attract experienced and competent personnel and timeously fill the vacant posts.

Similar productive challenges are also visible in the health sector, where HR functions are solely a responsibility of the HSB. In 2005, Zimbabwe's health sector witnessed the unification of all the HR related functions under HSB as provided for in the Health Service Act of 2004. The HSB, because of centralisation, struggles to address HR concerns throughout the public health sector. Consequently, serious shortages of health professionals hit Zimbabwe (Mukungunugwa, 2012). A ReBuild Consortium (2016: 8) report succinctly captures the situation in the health sector as follows, "working and living conditions were poor... During the crisis remuneration, availability of medicines and equipment was unreliable. Supervision and support of health workers were poor causing wide-spread dissatisfaction among health workers." Since 2008, because of poor working conditions, the country suffers from brain drain as human resource professionals leave the public in search of greener pastures in the private sector and outside the country. The Harare Central Hospital (HCH) has experienced a series of work stoppages and devastating strikes by health workers in the last decade (Somane, 2018). Demands for improved working conditions and salaries resulted in industrial unrest at HCH. Such poor working conditions forced critical human resources for health to leave the organisation leading to a general shortage of critical health professionals (WHO, 2003). Unattractive remuneration and the ineffectiveness of the HSB to attract and retain employees resulted in shortages of critical human resources at HCH. This has negatively affected health service delivery. Mpilo and Parerenyatwa Hospitals, among others, are also grappling with performance management and service delivery challenges. This has compromised the commitment of health workers.

The omnipresence of the CSC in the HR process across Zimbabwe's public service created an irresponsive bureaucracy. The appointment of qualified and competent persons to hold posts in the public service is solely a responsibility of the CSC (2021). It is also responsible to hire, recruiting, fix and regulating conditions of service including salaries, allowances and other benefits of the civil services. In the same vein, the CSC performs audits to ensure that its members carry out their duties efficiently and partially, policy enforcing and employee administration (Ibid.). The central role of the CSC leaves suffocates the uptake and implementation of HRO. What, however, concerns many people is the failure of the CSC to effectively discharge HR function. Productivity challenges have characterised Zimbabwe's public service. Working conditions and salary-related complaints have become the order of the day. As Charles (2016) highlights, Zimbabwe's public service as a whole has a productivity problem. Zimbabwe's public workers produce less per hour compared to their counterparts in Zambia, Botswana and South Africa, with the gap widening since

the financial crisis (Khan & Mahmood, 2018). Zhou (2012) outlined challenges of HRD in Zimbabwe as developing comprehensive HR strategy, promoting a positive working environment, accepting modern technological changes and promoting positive workforce attitudes. Such a productivity challenge threatens socio-economic development given the central developmental role of the public sector. Consequently, different stakeholders are now clamouring for the public sector to revamp its operations, meet the rising citizen expectations, and deliver outcomes by doing things differently. Consumers of public services expect personalisation, customer service and a willingness to go the extra mile but this must be achieved in public bodies with less funding, not more (Adeyinka, 2014).

Implementing HRO: Key Factors to Consider

The previous section outlined challenges and failures encountered in the implementation of outsourcing in different countries in the globe, that renders the strategy inadequate in curbing public sector challenges. HRO, if appropriately adopted and implemented, can indeed be a panacea for public sector challenges (Van Weele, 2005). Van Weele (2005) emphasise the need to articulate the reasons for HRO as the first important step in the process. Having a clear-cut reason for embarking on an HRO journey enables the organisation to have an organised strategic plan. Of importance in the HRO process is the need to prioritise and choose the functions that are to be outsourced since it enables the organisation to choose those functions that the organisation could benefit from more if they were outsourced. Another step entails the ability to choose or select the appropriate supplier to outsource the chosen functions. It is crucial to research the various suppliers to choose the most suitable supplier and avoid choosing a supplier who will cost the organisation more due to the failure to deliver. Building and managing a relationship with the supplier is crucial in the process of outsourcing since it enables the public sector to be able to monitor and evaluate the activities of the supplier. The relationship should be built on a contractual agreement that directs the monitoring and evaluation process to ascertain if the supplier has been able to live up to the contractual expectations. The contractual agreement is also important in that it specifies the terms of employment that are not limited to the services to be provided, amount to be paid, transfer of staff from the public sector to the supplier, conditions relating to the termination of employment (Mclvor, 2005; Van Weele, 2005).

Vintar and Stanimirovic's (2021) outsourcing implementation guidelines are synonymous with Van Weele's (2005) implementation steps. According to Vintar and Stanimirovic (2021), defining the main and non-core activities and functions of the organisation should be the first step in the outsourcing process. Drawing a demarcation line between core and non-core activities of the organisation makes the process of choosing that functions to outsource easier as it is always recommended to outsource the non-core activities to focus more on the core functions. Formulating an outsourcing strategy is crucial to Vintar and Stanimirovic (2021) as it provides

a framework to be utilised in making decisions on the outsourcing process. Cost-benefit analysis or any other assessment formulas should be utilised to ascertain the long-term impacts of the outsourcing process. The importance of assessing the impact of outsourcing lies in its ability to reveal even the intended and the unintended costs for the organisation to be aware of before implementing the strategy. Such a process enables the organisation to be aware of the hidden costs and if the process could be more expensive than having the organisation provide the service internally to evade such costs.

Rosenbaum (2015) emphasises the importance of ensuring the availability of financial, material and human resources before embarking on any HRO endeavour for it to be successful. The lack of financial resources in Hong Kong compromised the quality of training services rendered by the external supplier. Vyas (2019) argues that there is a co-relationship between the availability of resources and the quality of services provided by the external supplier. This is so because adequate resources enable the public sector to contract human resources with high expertise who will be able to provide quality services and satisfy consumers. Having sufficient resources enables the public sector to hire highly qualified external human resources to provide the desired services to the expected standards.

The organisations should further consider internal and external cost-effectiveness. Such synergies could be made with other public sector organisations to reduce transactional costs. Lastly, Vintar and Stanimirovic (2021: 222) underscore the importance of formulating “a vision, strategic objectives, and precise tactics and provide funds for achieving long-term organisational goals, beyond a period of government mandate”. Such strategic planning and organisation facilitate effective HRO implementation and result in the attainment of positive outcomes. The government should enact a human resources’ outsourcing policy for the appointment of high-level grades. In addition, the public sector needs to build strong public-private partnerships in building and implementing outsourcing functions within the public sector. However, strong Treasury budgetary commitment should support such collaboration to achieve a highly productive public sector workforce.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Governments across the globe have embraced HRO to reduce HR costs, allow HR departments to focus on strategic functions and increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness. The Hong Kong and Nigerian cases generate crucial lessons on the practical value of HRO in the public sector. However, the uptake of HRO in Zimbabwe’s public organisations is very low. The limited available public sector HRM literature shows the centralisation of HR functions in the hands of centrally created commissions and boards. Cases in point include, among others, the CSC, LGB and HSB. The human resources productivity challenging stemming from the centralisation of HR functions are, however, worrisome. Experiences in the health, local government, and public service exposed the lacklustre performance of traditional

centralised personnel management commissions and boards. The study revealed that all the reviewed sectors are grappling with high senior management vacancy rates. The senior management vacant positions have hampered service delivery and productivity levels, with negative implications on the realisation of development goals. Against this background, the study argued for the outsourcing of non-core HR functions, for example, recruitment of senior management, to improve responsiveness and productivity in the public sector. Effective public machinery is critical for the realisation of Vision 2030 and other development plans. Without it, development remains an elusive dream. The chapter, however, emphasised that the outsourcing of HR functions without critical considerations of transactional costs and other related risks can significantly cripple public sector operations. Therefore, the policymakers should take note of the following: a clear reason or justification for outsourcing, considering the transactional costs involved, clear goals and outsourcing strategies, differentiation of core and non-core functions, availability of funding, and availability of contract management knowledge and skills. At the national level, the government should enact a mandatory outsourcing policy to encourage and guide outsourcing processes in the public sector.

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Chapter 11

The Health and Safety Perspectives in the Zimbabwe Public Sector



Davidzo H. Mapuvire, Sharon R. T. Chilunjika, and Florence Mutasa

Abstract This chapter is a review of the occupational health and safety measures in the public sector to determine their adequacy in ensuring the wellbeing of the employees in the working environment. The goal of occupational health and safety measures is to prevent or at least minimize the chances of injuries, deaths and diseases arising from the working environment. Like many other countries, Zimbabwe is a signatory to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions on occupational health and safety. The country has developed policy, legislation and institutional frameworks on occupational health and safety at sectoral, organisational and national levels. The study adopted an exploratory qualitative design and data was gathered through the desktop to determine any gaps in terms of occupational health and safety strategies in place. The study results established that the occupational health and safety measures in the public sector are inadequate. The country lacks a comprehensive and harmonized occupational health and safety legal framework. The study recommends that the government of Zimbabwe should take adequate preventative and protective measures to ensure a safe working environment for all workers in the public sector.

Keywords Occupational health and safety · Public sector · Personnel health · Occupational hazards · Legislative framework

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Introduction and Background

Workers constitute half of the world's population and are the main contributors to the economic and social development of modern societies (ILO, 2019). Access to health and safety in the workplaces has however not matched the industrialization spur in both 1st world and developing economies (Moyo et al., 2015). This is supported by statistics showing that more than 2 million work related deaths and about 300 million non-fatal occupational accidents occur annually around the globe (Mpofu, 2019). According to the ILO (2019), these occupational accidents and deaths result in global economic costs amounting to about 4% of the global gross domestic product (GDP). Despite these alarming statistics and the negative effects that occupational fatalities have on people's lives Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) has not received significant attention and support when compared to other global health problems such as Malaria, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS. In fact (Schmidth et al., 2017) argue that Occupational Health and Safety issues remain an island whose existence remains recognized but little effort is put towards supporting it. There is thus, an urgent need for policymakers to come up with adequate support, preventive, protective and control measures to redress the situation.

Despite millions of workers being at risk of various types of occupational-related diseases including pneumoconiosis, mental health and musculoskeletal disorders, there is a scarcity of information on work-related fatalities in Sub Saharan Africa on that to base OHS outcomes (Mrema et al., 2015). The region lacks coordinated systems to collect this data regularly and actively, relying on "passive notifications" from either compensation institutions or labour inspectorate whenever workplace accidents occur (Mrema et al., 2015). Published literature estimates about 18,000 workers die in work-related accidents on the continent annually, while more than 1.3 million are injured in accidents and 67,00 contract occupational illness (Mpofu, 2019). Zimbabwe is no exception to this as evidenced by the significant gaps in OHS related information (Maumbe, 2017). The magnitude of work-related accidents and illnesses arising from economic activities such (manufacturing, transport, construction, commerce and agriculture) in Zimbabwe are yet to be fully ascertained because of lack of coordinated national reporting systems for such accidents (Maumbe, 2017) In this regard diseases, accidents and deaths as a result of occupational hazards are a major concern among Zimbabwean workers.

When it comes to public sector employees, the most common causes of work-related hazards within office settings emanate from prolonged physical inactivity (Muzhazha-Nyandoro & Nyawude, 2017). It has been observed that prolonged physical inactivity especially among employees who spend most of their working hours seated can lead to numerous health problems such as cardiovascular diseases, digestive problems, obesity, and reduced lung efficiency (Brauer, 2006). Similarly, Jambwa and Chitongo (2013) argue that sedentary public sector employees are further exposed to hazardous conditions such as dust in their poorly ventilated offices, old, dilapidated office furniture, long hours of computer use, and other related hazards caused by poor working conditions that strain their bodies.

According to Brauer (2006), long hours of computer use among public sector employees are harmful to human health and can result in soreness and numbness in the arms and shoulders. In addition to this, bright light and flickering images on the computer can strain eyes. In the long run, millions of employees acquire diseases, injuries and some become permanently disabled due to these occupational hazards (Jambwa & Chitongo, 2013). Despite the tremendous negative effects on the lives of employees and their families, access to OHS in the workplace remains a challenge in Zimbabwe (Muzhazha- Nyandoro and Nyawude, 2017). Statistics reveal that the country continues to experience a sharp increase in occupational mishaps with figures rising 2443% to 133 000 employees who were injured and contracted the work-related illness in 2019 (Mhlanga, 2020). The figures indicate a widespread problem and a substantial economic burden on individuals, the government, and the society at large. Higher occupational injuries, illness and deaths are also adding to the economic crisis experienced in Zimbabwe, highlighting the need to invest in OHS (Mhlanga, 2020). Employers and in this case, the government, must forecast, assess and control a wide range of workplace-related hazards that can harm the health and safety of their employees.

Banda (2014) observes that putting in place effective occupational health and safety strategies appeal to an employee's mental status including trust and reliability. Murrall et al. (2011) highlights that implementing OHS programmes promotes organisational efficiency and reduces costs. Moreover, these measures signify the employer's moral and ethical commitment to protect their workers from accidents and ill health when at work. In summary, the overall benefit of implementing OHS strategies include organisational efficiency, increased worker morale, reduced costs, employee retention and staff commitment to the organisation. It is against this background that the study explores health and safety perspectives in the Zimbabwean public sector and their implications on employee wellbeing. Public sector employees are critical to economic development and the provision of basic goods and services, and their wellbeing should be guaranteed at all costs. The study seeks to address the following key questions; What are the regulatory frameworks governing OHS in Zimbabwe's public sector? That key institutions are involved in OHS in Zimbabwe? What are the current gaps and challenges to OHS in Zimbabwe' public sector?

Literature Review

Occupational Health and Safety in the Contemporary Public Sector: An Overview

Over the last two decades, working conditions in the public sector have considerably changed under political pressures to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Schmidth et al., 2017). These changes and reforms have been implemented in accordance with the principles of New Public Management (NPM) that include contacting out,

decentralization of activities and introduction of performance management drawn from the private sector (Hall, 2013). In other words, private sector practices have been transferred to the public sector. NPM also emphasises the need to adopt robust systems and checks for improved employee health and safety in the workplace. However, these NPM transformations have also affected working life, with negative consequences for working conditions including issues on OHS due to growing demands and dwindling resources (Diefenbuch, 2009).

NPM introduced contracting between separated purchaser and provider and today public sector institutions are now regarded as large businesses purchasing professional services and temporary labour (Schmidt et al., 2017). This situation has resulted in contract employment and retrenchments, that has seen a decline in workplace and worker safety representation, a critical cog in the formulation and implementation of OHS systems (Diefenbuch, 2009). In most countries, both developing and developed, worker representation has been seen as key support for effective OHS in the public sector (Jambwa and Chitongo, 2013). Additionally, the ILO also stipulates that the employer should ensure that employees and their health and safety representatives are consulted, informed, and trained on all aspects of OHS, including emergency arrangements associated with their work (Taderera, 2012). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, legislation requires employers to consult health and safety representatives regarding OHS measures and programmes, the decrease in worker representation is thus problematic and poses threats for effective OHS promotion in organisations (Jabwa and Chitongo, 2013). As such employers should make certain the establishment and effective functioning of safety and health committees and the recognition of workers' safety and health representatives in accordance with national laws and practices.

Moreover, in most countries, political systems are based on the principle that decisions taken by the elected politicians shall be put into practice by professional officials in public administration (Schmidt et al., 2017). As such fundamentals and overall limits on the adoption, implementation, and management of OHS provisions and the budgets for the utilisation of these services is set by politicians (Schmidt et al., 2017). Guided by the various legislative frameworks underpinning good labour practices and motivated by knowledge, market dynamics, scope and nature of the organisation, public sector organisations should thus find OHS models perceived to be best in their organisations. Ultimately, in modern-day societies, political governance plays a huge part in the implementation of OHS policies, projects, and plans. As such strong political will is necessary for effective OHS implementation across the globe.

Numerous competing theoretical models have been suggested and used in the domain of OHS research and these include Heinrich's Domino- accident causation model, Bird's loss causation theory and Rasmussen's risk management framework. According to (Wang & Yan, 2019) each of these theories have their distinct approach when used for analysing accidents. However, they have a common disadvantage (Fu et al., 2016), they fail to define the accident cause and each level so that people may not prevent accidents by directly, accurately, or conveniently applying the analytical

process and interpreting their results. As such an improved accident causation model was developed by Fu et al. (2016).

Improved Accident Causation Model

The Improved Accident Causation Model seeks to demonstrate the relationship between the cause and effect that the predating theories have failed to do (Wang & Yan, 2019). It postulates that all occupational accidents belonging to the organisation are mainly attributed to internal organisational causes at both individual and organisational levels (Fu et al., 2016). Furthermore, the theory indicates that accidents also result from interactions among causal factors residing at all levels of the sociotechnical system that are from the government to all individuals in the involved organisation. These causal factors can be classified as internal and external causes based on the manageable boundaries of the organisation. Wang and Yan (2019) define the internal causes as those much more changeable and controllable by the managers of the organisation to improve safety performance. These internal causes, therefore, serve as key points for accident analysis, and they include lack of safety culture, poor or non-existent safety management systems, flaws in safety awareness and lack of safety knowledge. On the other hand, external causes mainly involve factors from natural disasters, poor government supervision and substandard OHS designs that commonly contribute to accidents by influencing the internal causes (Fu et al., 2016). Figure 11.1 below depicts the Improved Accident Causation Model.

According to Fu et al. (2016), the red dotted line signifies the manageable boundary of an organisation related to the accidents that separate all the causes in socio-technical systems into internal and external ones. The blue boxes are the internal causes that are categorized into five classifications from individual faults to organisational deficiencies. The blue arrows in the diagram indicate the sequence of internal causes leading to accidents and these include defective safety management systems, flaws in individual safety knowledge, then unsafe acts and unsafe conditions that eventually lead to an accident. It should be noted the correlation between these

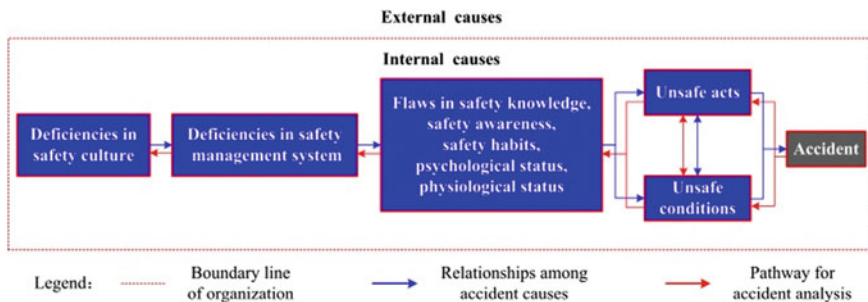


Fig. 11.1 Improved accident causation model (Source Adopted from Fu et al. [2016])

factors is what ultimately results in occupational accidents (Wang & Yan, 2019). On the other hand, the red arrows show the order undertaken when conducting accident analysis that begins from bad outcomes to immediate causes, to flaws in an employee's safety knowledge, safety awareness, flaws in the organisational safety management systems and finally in the weakness in safety culture (Fu et al., 2016).

The significance of this theory lies in its ability to provide a pathway for accident analysis from the individual level to the organisational level. Given the nature of the public sector, this theory enables OHS research to be conducted with individual organisations in mind as they differ in scope and mandate. It also encourages systematic research into the multiple causes of accidents in government departments, parastatals and local authorities that can lead to effective systems that abate occupational accidents among public sector employees.

Methodology

This study was qualitative. The researchers employed secondary data collection methods. Secondary methods involve documentary review where journal articles, academic books, newspapers and research articles were examined to gain insights into the issues relating to the Health and safety perspectives in the Zimbabwe public sector. Bailey (1994) argues that documentary search entails the analysis of documents that contain information regarding the subject matter to be studied. The definition above recommends the researchers determine the relevance of the sources that they utilise based on their significance to the research. Similarly, Dey, 2005 observes that criteria for choosing documents used in a study must reflect the issues on that the researchers are seeking evidence. The researchers gathered data regarding the Health and Safety perspectives in the Zimbabwe public sector from documents that include both published and unpublished works. The main advantage of using this instrument was that the data was readily available. Since the research relied on secondary data, the researchers acknowledged sources used to avoid plagiarism. Manual thematic and Matrix analysis on Microsoft word was then used to analyse data.

Results and Discussion

Occupational Health and Safety Management in Zimbabwe

Regulatory Frameworks Governing Occupational Health and Safety in Zimbabwe

At an international level, occupational health and safety regulations are modelled around the ILO Conventions 155 and 161 that guide the promotion of occupational

health and safety systematically (Mazhazha-Nyandoro & Nyaude, 2017). The ILO guidelines facilitate the formation, implementation, and evaluation of OHS interventions and regulations at sectoral, organisational, and national levels in all member countries (ILO, 2001). In addition, the ILO-OHS Framework (2001) outlines the legislation and standards, that apply to organisations and prescribes the procedures for hazardous and risk assessment.

Zimbabwe as a signatory to the above-mentioned ILO conventions came up with laws surrounding health and safety at the workplace. At a general level, occupational and health safety laws that apply to all employers and employees across sectors are the Labour Act, Chapter 28:01 and NSSA (Accident Prevention) (Workers Compensation scheme) Notice No. 68 of 1990 (Mywage.org/Zimbabwe: online). These laws emphasise creating awareness and promoting health and safety in the workplaces, providing rehabilitation services, and enforcing health and safety legislation and providing financial benefits to families of workers who have been killed or injured or who have acquired occupational illness (Jerie, 2012). These frameworks are discussed below.

Accident Prevention and Workers' Compensation (Statutory Instrument 68 of 1990)

According to Mpofu (2019), Statutory Instrument 68 of 1990 is quite detailed in presenting a platform for the management of OHS issues in places of employment across all sectors. The key issues highlighted in this Act include the roles of employers and employees in implementing OHS policies and safeguarding their OHS rights in workplaces. It also provides for the right to compensation for employees that suffer injuries and illness acquired during their course of service. Statutory Instrument 68 of 1990 goes further to stipulate the grounds on that compensation will not be granted to employees. The reasons include, death occurring more than a year after an accident at work unless it is verified to have directly originated from the injury and deliberate negligence and misconduct (Moyo et al., 2015). Scheduled occupational illnesses arising from various workplace hazards are also listed and serious occupational accidents are defined as those resulting in permanent disablement of more than 30% (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010).

Additionally, the Statutory Instrument highlights that employers should notify all workers of any risks arising from the use of new technologies and their imminent dangers. Furthermore, the employer must take an instantaneous action to discontinue any operations or activities that poses danger to the safety and health of employees and evacuate them as appropriate. This Statutory Instrument also prescribes that is the responsibility of NSSA to compensate injured workers in the event of occupational hazards, paid from the financial contributions from both the employer and employees collected over the employment period. However, the literature reviewed brought to light a number of challenges that affect the effectiveness of this Statutory Instrument in Zimbabwe, and these include lack of proper enforcement mechanisms and capacity

challenges (inadequate financial, human and technological resources (Moyo et al., 2015, Mazhazha-Nyandoro & Nyaunde, 2017).

Based on the research reviews it was apparent that the enforcement mechanisms provided for by SI 68 of 1990 (punishment of a level five fine or a jail sentence not exceeding six months) imposed on defaulters, raises doubt as to whether the employers and workers will live up to their responsibilities. In other words, these penalties are not sufficient motivation for employers and employees to comply with OHS regulations put in place by the government. The study also found out that the contributions currently paid to NSSA are not enough adequate to cover medical bills and the welfare of injured employees and their families in the event of permanent disability. The small percentage of each employee's contribution (1.38% of each employee's insurable earning) and the current prevailing economic environment in the country has largely contributed to this situation. For instance, for a public employee earning 30 000 ZWL their contribution would only be \$ 414 ZWL. It was also observed that the Factory Inspectorate and OHS services department at NSSA is currently understaffed and has limited transportation capacity. To this effect, the department is forced to take limited action on reported accidents. In most cases, priority is given to very serious cases or those in easy to reach areas within the proximity of the inspectorate.

Public Service State Service (Disability Benefits) Act [Chapter 16:05]

According to this scheme workers who became permanently disabled from injuries sustained at workplaces of at least 30% are entitled to compensation that is paid as a pension (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). The scheme further stipulates that workers who suffer permanent disabilities below 30% receive a hefty once-off payment commensurate with the severity of their condition (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). In analysis, public servants in Zimbabwe hardly benefit from this scheme in the event of occupation hazards. Although the tenants of the scheme are good, the processes of benefiting from the scheme are highly bureaucratic and cumbersome such that few workers have benefited from the scheme since its inception.

The Public Health Control of Tobacco Statutory Instrument 264 of 2002 and the Labour Relations HIV and AIDS S.I 202 of 1998

At the secondary level, there is the Public health control of Tobacco (Statutory Instrument (S.I) 264 of 2002) that protects workers from acquiring illness due to public smoking. This instrument bans smoking in enclosed public places including places of work. Although the Act exists, its applicability in the Zimbabwean public sector remains a big challenge. The concept of public places is rather difficult to interpret and enforce thus workers feel it is their right to smoke while at work. Due to the lack

of proper infrastructure, the protection and health of workers are highly compromised. Most public service offices are highly congested and lack proper ventilation thereby exposing workers to risks of getting ill while at work.

Labour Relations HIV and AIDS S.I 202 of 1998 is another framework that safeguards the health and safety of employees in Zimbabwe's public sector. Among other issues, this legislation spells out the provision of protective clothing and other safety devices to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS in workplaces (Taderera, 2012). In a bid to promote mental health among workers infected by the disease it prohibits discrimination on the grounds of HIV and AIDS status, including respecting the confidentiality of the employee's HIV status and prohibiting compulsory testing for HIV as a requirement of employment (Taderera, 2012). In line with this framework, the study findings revealed that all public institutions acknowledge that the fight against HIV and AIDS calls for a multi-sectoral approach where all public employees are involved both in their individual and official capacities.

The public Sector also developed the HIV Workplace policy that directed public service departments on forming HIV and AIDS workplace structures to support those infected and affected and promoting educating others on contracting HIV. To ensure the success of this policy, findings reveal that all public institutions have put in place HIV and AIDS focal individuals who have undertaken training in mainstreaming HIV and AIDS issues in organisational strategic plans and developmental programmes. The policy framework also spells out HIV/AIDS as an occupational issue and defines those who contracted the virus while conducting their direct duties to be compensated by the government.

Although the policy is good, its application and interpretation by user departments have been very weak. Due to limited fiscal space, the government has not been able to seriously follow up HIV cases as an occupational health issue rather these have been left with human resources departments to manage workforce mobility. Therefore, the commitment of the employer to protect and assist the public sector workforce against HIV/AIDS has been a rhetoric theme that lacked systematic interpretation and implementation. Most government departments reveal they do not have HIV/AIDS workplace committees and the absence of workers' committees in the public servants set up presents difficulties for those who could have benefited as there is no formal structure to handle health safety concerns from employees.

The Factories and Workers Act Chapter 14:08

The Factories and Worker Act Chapter 14:08 is also used to promote OHS in Zimbabwe (Banda, 2014). This Act addresses the need to establish accident registers at workplaces and ensure that all accidents that result in absence of more than three days are reported to the inspector for accountability purposes (Muzhazha-Nyandoro & Nyawude, 2017). It also requires that medical personnel attending to employees suffering from lead, mercury poisoning or anthrax as a result of occupational exposures make a formal report to the inspector (Mpofu, 2019). The implementation of the Act within the public sector departments resides within human resources

practitioners and indeed exists. The study established there are registers maintained at workplaces especially within the health occupations where all health personnel must maintain incident reports on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. However, the interval of reporting has been affected by negative attitudes and a lack of appreciation of the importance of maintaining such a record.

Furthermore, it was established that the country has a weak system for the comparative analysis and production of annual occupational health statistics (Masekamani et al., 2020). Although the government of Zimbabwe through NSSA has adopted an OHS database management system for collecting, classifying and analysing accident data it is not effectively used due to technical and financial constraints. Correspondingly, attributable to the dearth of staff in the public domain and lack of appreciation of the importance of maintaining OHS records, data entry is not carried out uniformly throughout the public sector. In the end, this could mean that the data cannot be used to report and analyse data using international classification systems (Masekamani et al., 2020) accurately and truthfully.

Public Health (COVID-19) Prevention, Containment and Treatment Regulations (Statutory Instrument 77 of 2020)

Following the emergence of the Corona Virus in 2019 (COVID-19) and the subsequent declaration by the World Health Organisation of the virus as a global catastrophe, the pandemic has been threatening the health and livelihoods of employees around the world. In response to the pandemic, a state of disaster was declared by the president of Zimbabwe on the 20th of March 2020 and soon after this the SI 77 of 2020 was gazetted to limit and prohibit commercial activities in both the public and private sectors, and outline measures to prevent, contain and treat those affected by the disease. (Muzvidziwa-Chilunjika et al. 2020) argue that the capacity of the public sector to deliver basic services has been comprised by the pandemic in the following ways:

- Exacerbated absenteeism due to sickness, deaths and attending to sick relatives or funerals
- Increased stress at the workplace due to inadequate Personal Protective Equipment PPE, leading to lower productivity.
- The brain drain of qualified and experienced employees (especially in the health sector) due to their mass exodus in pursuit of greener pastures in European countries who were hit hard by the pandemic

In relation to OHS, the legislation outlines that employer should test their employees and adhere to the Covid-19 prevention protocols at their workplaces. The statutory instrument also stipulates that employers should provide PPE, sanitisers and maintain workplace hygiene practices including the provision of clean water sources for washing hands in public places. The study found out that public institutions such as state universities, parastatals including ZETDC and some local authorities gave out PPE (masks) and sanitisers to their staff. However, it was observed that these

provisions were not adequate, and their distribution was not constant due to financial constraints. It was disturbing to argue that the working conditions of public health-care workers, who were the most critical instrument in the fight against the pandemic were at times dire. This is supported by a series of health worker strikes that were instigated in part due to a lack of adequate PPE between August and September 2020. A situation that hampered the efficient delivery of health services to the public at a time they need them the most.

Although the government embarked on OHS inspections to carry to monitor the adherence of COVID-19 protocols at workplaces, information provided by NSSA in its report on Convention no 170 of the ILO indicated that it remains a challenge to refer cases of incompliance detected during inspections to courts due to limited understanding of Judicial system on OHS issues. Coupled with lenient penalties imposed on those who fail to follow the OHS laws, enforcement of compliance remains problematic in Zimbabwe (ILO, 2020).

Key Institutions Involved in Occupational Health and Safety in Zimbabwe's Public Sector

Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is the arm of government that works in partnership with the ILO in promoting good OHS governance in Zimbabwe (Taderera, 2012). This is achieved through its Labour administration and employment services department whose statutory responsibility is to protect all workers by promoting fair labour practices and making the utmost possible contribution to the socio-economic wellbeing of the nation (NSSA, 2012). The Ministry is also responsible for crafting and implementing national policies, plans and projects on OHS through NSSA. The study established that the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social welfare has a department that represents employees on any form of labour practices likely to affect their welfare, health and safety. The function is decentralized to provincial and district levels across the country to assist workers in accessing information and advise them of their rights. The quality of knowledge disseminated from the respective Ministry offices and the accessibility of the functions by workers remains a debate. However, to a lesser extent, public sector workers in Zimbabwe have a representative body that is designed to assist solve occupational issues in cases of disagreements within the service period.

In relation to the protection of public servants' OHS rights, a study by (Masekameni et al., 2020) indicated the need by the government to take measures to ensure that workers are fully protected from undue consequences especially on those who remove themselves from a work situation that they have reasonable justification to

believe presents an imminent danger to their health and life. Furthermore (Masekameni et al., 2020) emphasised the need to avail information on legal frameworks adopted when such cases occur.

National Social Security Authority (NSSA)

NSSA is a statutory corporate body established in terms of the NASSA Act (Chapter 17:04) tasked by the government to provide social security. Its mission is to provide sustainable social security and promote OHS to all its members through responsive schemes and services. The body has four departments that are, OHS promotions and training, research and development, Factory inspectorate and OHS services. This institution also works hand in hand with the Zimbabwe Occupational Health and Safety Council (ZOHSC) that is a tripartite organisation that comprises the government, employers, and labour unions.

Through its OHS services department, the body raises awareness, promote health and safety in workplaces and compensate victims of occupational accidents through its two schemes (Pension and other benefits scheme and Accident Prevention and Workers' compensation scheme. The schemes meet all the expenses related to workplace illness and injuries such as drugs, hospital bills, transport, artificial limbs (crutches, hearing aids and dentures) and other apparatus used by people who have been physically disabled (NSSA, 2012). However, the study discovered that the National Social Security Schemes governed under NSSA have been marred by misappropriation of contributors' funds and in the past years has been on public domain for failing to offer meaningful assistance to workers in the event of eventualities while at work. Furthermore, despite the contributions made by the employees within the public sector, the assistance rendered by NSSA in the event of accidents is rather not known. It was also observed that the public service workforce covered by under scheme is very small, currently, the employees in the civil service are not covered at all. It is thus critical that the country develop strategies targeted at workers in the public sector as they are not immune to numerous workplace health and safety hazards.

The Zimbabwe Occupational Health and Safety Council (ZOHSC)

This council is a tripartite organisation of government, employers, and trade unions. The council was established to facilitate the interaction of these three main actors to come up with OHS plans, projects and programmes that can transform the labour industry, individual organisations and employees (Taderera, 2012). Moreover, the council provides a linkage between the government and individual organisations for

systematic evaluation and review of OHS policies, plans and projects emanating from the micro and macro levels (Taderera, 2012). The study established that the council has been very instrumental in the promotion of OHS in Zimbabwe through its research and the advice it renders to the minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare on policy matters. In some cases, the ZOHSC also supervises the occupational health and safety activities of NSSA on behalf of the minister. The council, however, has limited capacity to carry out more groundbreaking research in OHS. This limited capacity can be addressed by collaborative work, where Tertiary institutions in the country support the council in carrying out this research.

Challenges of Implementing Standard Occupational Health and Safety Practices in Zimbabwe's Public Sector

The study discovered several challenges that public institutions in Zimbabwe are encountering in their attempt to implement standard occupational health and safety practices. These challenges include;

A Substantial Underestimation of Occupational Illness

The underestimation of occupational illness and disease-related fatalities is possibly one of the most serious challenges impeding the implementation of standard occupational health and safety practices in Zimbabwe's public sector. In 2020 NSSA recorded only 4574 injuries and 47 fatalities a sharp contrast to 133 000 injuries recorded by the Zimbabwe National Statistic Agency (Mhlanga, 2020). The lack of adequate surveillance systems at NSSA has led to much of the data on the disease impact of occupational risk to be drawn from ad hoc surveys that report incorrect figures. These figures present a false picture that results in a cycle of neglect as many cases go unnoticed.

Additionally, the study found out that several occupational illnesses that public workers are exposed to have been largely underestimated in formal reporting systems. These include respiratory diseases in office workers exposed to dust, communicable diseases in laboratory and health personnel, back and eye problems in office workers who spend most of their time sitting in front of computers. Without correct systematic indicative information, occupational health outcomes in the public sector will not get the attention they deserve. In fact (Mhlanga, 2020) observes that underestimating occupational health risks means they will never be considered as key factors in production decisions, when in fact they are key in determining the productivity of the public sector. Raising awareness of the costs of poor OHS conditions at the national and organisational level is, therefore, key to ensuring the prioritization of OHS issues. Awareness campaigns will act as eye-openers on the benefits that public

organisations can reap from investing in the prevention of occupational fatalities and illness.

Lack of a Comprehensive and Harmonized Occupational Health and Safety Framework

The research established that the country lacks a comprehensive and harmonized OHS legal framework that covers all workplaces. It was observed that most public sector employees are not covered by OH or social legislation and they do not have access to occupational health services. Moreover, findings revealed that there is no state intervention in OHS disputes, and it remains a challenge to refer cases of in compliance to courts of law due to an inadequate understanding of judicial systems on OHS issues. There is thus needed to work on implementing coherent legal frameworks that prioritize and protect public sector employees as they are key in national development.

Inadequate Occupational Health Safety Budgeting and Staff

Findings indicated that most public institutions do not have adequate OHS budgets. In parastatals such as ZETDC for instance OHS budgets are crafted and authorized by the Human Resources Department in consultation with the Health Officer at the organisation's headquarters. This arrangement leaves health officers in different branches with little autonomy to decide on OHS issues that may require urgent attention to that funds may need additional authorization.

The study also found out that public organisations fail to adequately allocate the human capital required to effectively implement OHS strategies needed to realize a safe work environment for their employees. For instance, at Mbare Polyclinic this study observes that one of the challenges that they were facing in the execution of their duties along with other health officers in various local clinics was inadequate staff leading to a high workload. Amongst these responsibilities include budgeting for OHS activities, initiating health and safety-related training and development, attending to the requirements of workers who would have been involved in workplace accidents, maintaining a health insurance register for all employees, and carrying out inspections on the upholding of OHS standards at the various local clinics. The government together with individual public sector organisations need to avail adequate resources required to successfully implement OHS systems to realize positive outcomes.

Weak Organisational Culture

As indicated by the Improved Accident Causation Model organisational culture is a critical factor in the success of OHS implementation. However, the findings revealed that most public sector organisations have weak OHS culture. The study established that the actualization of safety at the individual level is affecting the drive to run operations under safe most mode in most public organisations. The findings point to the fact that most public sector employees mainly care about their health and safety than those of their counterparts. As a result of this, they are generally reluctant to embrace OHS policies and safety culture as a collective. It is of paramount importance that public employees be taught that the creation of a safe and healthy working environment inclusive for all is key for development cooperation aimed at poverty reduction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that Zimbabwe lacks a comprehensive and harmonized occupational health and safety legal framework. Access to health and safety in the workplaces has however not matched the industrialization spur in both 1st world and developing economies. When it comes to public sector employees the most common causes of work-related hazards within office settings emanate from prolonged physical inactivity. It has been observed that prolonged physical inactivity especially among employees who spend most of their working hours seated can lead to numerous health problems such as cardiovascular diseases, digestive problems, obesity, and reduced lung efficiency.

The public sector subscribes to the International Labour Organisation OHS conventions, NSSA Statutory Instrument 68/90 and several other statutes that concern the safety of the worker amongst them the Factories and Workers Act [Chapter 151:08] and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These form the regulatory basis on that the public sector implements its OHS system. Further to these regulatory frameworks are the policy and institutional frameworks that act as blueprints to the operationalization of the OHS. Institutional frameworks include the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social welfare, National Social Security Authority, Zimbabwe Occupational Health and Safety Council (ZOHSC), Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC).

One of the important pillars of a universal OSH strategy includes the adoption and implementation of a national preventative OSH protocol. New technologies, globalisation and continuous demographic shifts have produced far-reaching changes in the world of work and new challenges for the safety and health of workers (Lavicoli, 2016). According to Zwetsloot et al. (2017), the zero-accident vision is a promising approach developed in industry, but not so much addressed by the safety science research community. Policymakers in the public sector should establish policies that

are easy to adopt and take account of occupational safety and health strategies. The conditions that give rise to injuries must be reflected in regulatory standards, that must be communicated to workplace parties, and enforcement strategies must be implemented to identify and address non-compliance (MA, 2016).

Occupational safety strategies should be premised on understanding a safe work environment to ensure the strategies address the right causes. Leaders need to construct a safety culture that will not collapse under the pressure of quick fixes but a culture of excellence (Saujani, 2016). A strong safety culture allows managers to make practical regulations that emphasise a harmonious relationship between humans and nature and strengthen miners' awareness of mine safety (Chu et al., 2016). The strength of a company's safety performance lies within the strength of its safety culture (Ali & Shariff, 2016). Ivensky (2016) concurred with Ali and Shariff (2016) and added if culture is to yield sustainable results; it must be integrated wholly and firmly within core line management instruments and the fundamental tasks of human resources management.

Improving workplace safety and health is key to organisational development and sustainability. Training may offer some potential in helping support learning, behaviour change and is consistent with feedback and development approaches used in the public sector training is an integral part of risk management for risk identification and communication between all the stakeholders including management, technical and safety personnel, Walker (2014), argued that lack of knowledge and training is a major cause of occupational accidents especially in the public sector. Educational safety programmes are therefore required to increase peoples' knowledge by giving them a background on theories, principles and techniques for improving their future problem-solving abilities (Line&Albechtsen, 2016).

There ought to be an independent budgetary allocation for the OHS activities outside of the Human Resources Department. The work specialisation of the proposed department of OHS requires an independent budgetary allocation that would enable for OHS specific financial planning. Such an establishment will ensure that there is an independent financial function in which the Director of OHS resides over defending OHS spending. This will also ensure that there is reduced bureaucratic tape in the attainment of approval to spend on other non-budget planned expenditures such as emergency cases. Therefore, there is a need for an independent budgetary allocation towards OHS to the OHS Department.

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Chapter 12

Picking up the Pieces and Way Forward



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Abstract Human capital management functions in the public sector have not been widely conceptualised and as such practitioners lack full understanding of concepts and processes essential in transforming the public service delivery. The book chapters gave an in-depth discussion on human capital management aspects believed to be essential in building desired effective performance and minimising possible workforce challenges in the modern environment.

Human capital management functions in the public sector have not been widely conceptualised and as such practitioners lack full understanding of concepts and processes essential in transforming the public service delivery. The book chapters gave an in-depth discussion on human capital management aspects believed to be essential in building desired effective performance and minimising possible workforce challenges in the modern environment.

The role of Zimbabwean higher education institutions (HEI) in human capital development (HCD) discussed in Chap. 2 explores the processes, nature of skills development and the linkages, or lack of linkages, between HEI and industry for development. Generally, there is a fragmented skills development policy in most low-income countries. In addition, the studies explored in the chapter revealed that there is limited engagement between public sector and the corporate world in curriculum development to ensure relevant skills are produced for industry development. It is concluded that a coordinated skills development process, skills policy and frequent engagement with industry will help in skills development. There should be a national training policy that governs skills development by all institutions under the higher

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and tertiary education institutions. Furthermore, the government should increase its engagement with the industry to ensure relevant skills are produced. The working conditions of trainers should also be improved to meet the international standards to retain and motivate experienced and qualified trainers. A coordinated skills development process, skills policy and frequent engagement with industry will help in skills development. The study proposes that HEI staff should also be improved to meet the international standards to retain and motivate experienced and qualified trainers. Given that the stocks human capital resides in the employee through an employees' attitudes, education, genetic inheritance, knowledge, and skills, it can be argued that to create value, there is a need to have the human capabilities and capacities to develop new ways of working and new models of management. Thus, higher education and training remains important in human capital development.

Chapter 3 identified the strategies employed to enhance the quality of practical skills assessment by Zimbabwean higher education institutions (HEI). Quality practical skills can be drivers for the accomplishing of excellence in organisations. Hence, it is necessary to explore how practical skills can be enhanced. Item writing, field assignments, case studies, and theoretical assignments, practical and theoretical examinations remain the appropriate strategies for enhancing practical skills assessment. The chapter findings revealed that the quality of practical skills assessment can be enhanced through adequate resources, staff professional development, and the use of technology in teaching/learning to improve the competencies, knowledge, and skills of the graduates. Therefore, there is a need for the development of a holistic model of quality practical skills assessment for improving the acquisition of practical skills by the students.

Given constrained budgets with which most of the HEI in the developing, low-income countries, resources are scarce and hence, learners may not get the requisite equipment, tools and consumables that will allow the learners to manipulate the materials so that they can acquire practical skills. The twenty-first century public sector entities need to move towards the creation of industrial parks and innovation hubs in HEI which is a commendable move to ensure that the students are acclimatised to the kind of equipment, tools and technologies that they will use in the actual workplace. Authorities must put consideration into the importance of the learning environment in which the practical skills assessment are assessed. Implementing assessment methodologies and styles has the potential effect on the learning experience of the learner, as it can also develop their metacognitive and communication skills. It is also important that the 'purpose' of the practical skills being assessed is clear for both the learners and the tutors. HTE institutions should ensure that all the available assessment options and interventions are considered and implemented correctly. It is also necessary to review the practical skills to be assessed and identify whether it is every task/activity that must be assessed.

The desire to attain organizational competitive advantage has occupied renewed attention by organizations. Chapter 4 reviewed the challenges and opportunities on talent identification, nurturing and mentorship in the global economy. Identifying, nurturing, mentoring, and harvesting talent is becoming a major challenge grappling with organizations across the globe. As a contemporary practice in human capital

management, talent identification, nurturing and mentorship is at the epicentre in building and sustaining a transformative human resource in any organization. Lack of talent recognition, poor rewards, lack of motivation and shallow talent pool are some of the challenges obstructing talent identification and retention in Africa. Therefore, there is need to innovate and industrialize in its education sector to address the skills deficit and drive the attainment of national development goals. Leadership succession programs, talent development programs, incentivizing of talent and establishing a match between the skills and competencies to the job in Universities and organizations are key imperatives needed to the competitive transformation of human capital in the twenty-first century.

Responding to today's workplace demands, innovative means are to be implemented whereby firms retain and conserve their talented workforce by using new approaches such as talent identification, nurturing, and mentorship. Talent must be found, segmented, nurtured, and placed in pivotal positions that are crucial for the competitive advantage of the firm. Talent identification and nurturing in the African context has been largely constrained due to poor remuneration which has demotivated the current workforce as well as pushed away a lot of talent in organizations. Lack of commitment and investment in the development of human capital is another challenge that Africa is facing in human capital development. Most African countries have not been more concerned with identifying talent and recognizing top performers as key and valuable assets that can enhance sustainable human capital management in the capital.

Zimbabwe needs a tailor-made national skills development framework that develops skilled personnel in line with the human capital needs of the country towards the transformation of the economy. There is a need for the development of talent management strategies in organizations to ensure that talent has been harnessed and developed. There is an urgent need to implement talent management programs in Universities and organizations. The endeavour will be anchored on the need to nurture future leaders who are talented to effectively perform in the dynamic and complex environment. There is a need for the implementation of leadership succession programs in organizations. Despite the knowledge on the value of succession planning as a key enabler for organizational competitive advantage for retaining talented and competent leadership, the practice of identifying the right talent and nurturing that talent has been lacking in human capital management. The development of skills and competencies should match the current labour demands in modern-day industries. There is a need to mobilize resources and efforts to enhance digitalization in rural areas to cope up with the new realities of the twenty-first century. The deficit in digital skills deficit in the country should awaken the authorities that there is an urgent need to pursue digitalization in rural areas.

Chapter 5 discussed the digitalisation of HR systems as a necessity for effective public sector HRM. The twenty-first century public sector HR management calls for the integration of systems with a strong emphasis on embracing digitalisation and automation. The paradigm shifts call for the need to integrate all functions with digital technology to effectively and efficiently manage processes to achieve HRM goals. There is the absence of digital HR platforms to support processes of personnel record

keeping, hiring, retaining, and training of workforce as the public sector continues to rely on inefficient, paper-intensive HR systems. unexpected delays and inefficiencies are still experienced in responding to public service choirs and demands. Employees' productivity and performance management are still based on traditional practices ignoring the benefits of digital technology that could help improve turnaround times and instil a strong public service performance culture. It is advisable that the public sector strongly invests in automation and digital HR technologies including building adequate capacities to support e-HR systems.

Generally human resources management systems in developing countries have seen slow movement in terms of technological developments in the Human Resources Management arena in the Public Service. The Public sector still relies principally on manual systems to maintain information about employees. The public sector strongly invests in automation and digital HR technologies including building adequate capacities to support e-HR systems. Institutional improvements and capacity building are essential for digitalisation to be sustainably implemented within public sector entities. Policy review of existing regulatory frameworks is a necessity as it enables the creation of technology responsive procedures and processes supporting business in the twenty-first century way. The digitalisation of public HRM systems and processes must be sustained to cement the strategic human resources management systems for future economic development.

Priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills are globally acknowledged as a panacea in creating a vibrant and agile human capital that can operate in existing low resource set-ups. HRM challenges raise fundamental questions reading the quality of public leadership capacity. Critics have argued that government employees are largely too slow in serving clients and this resulted in long queues and over-crowding, they are arrogant, uncaring and insensitive, they practice favouritism in attending to clients, are lazy, they spend too much time doing their own private business, or they are unnecessarily absent from their workstations. Research points to the conclusion that there is a depressing experience underpinned by a low uptake of developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills in the public sector making it difficult for the government to continue providing quality and adequate goods and services to the public. Therefore, the theory concludes that there is imperative need to improve the economic landscape of public sector entities in low-income economies as well as unlock all avenues aimed at improving the welfare of public leaders. Equally, sensitisation on leadership change and innovation in the public sector remains a top priority.

Therefore, there is growing relevance associated with outputs is vital towards the improvement of the aptitude to learn. Continuous performance monitoring, if done using the participatory approach and accommodating critical internal and external players, can make a huge difference to organisational learning as well as capacity enrichment. The desired public sector leadership culture underlines listening to the clientele and motivating subordinates to enjoy their work by proving them with more decision-making responsibilities which in return influence outcomes. Equally, synchronisation of workers' retention programme with an appropriate reward strategy, and continuous review of the two systems, is necessary. The various

forms of reward systems adopted for civil service have a strong bearing on whether the government will be able to retain its valued talents. Strengthening the performance management-based appraisal approach is the best way to go as this will expectedly speed up the process of adopting the performance management culture in all the activities of the public service. Innovatively embracing change and critiquing the status quo are fundamental qualities in the current management and control of the civil service. Therefore, developing priority-driven leadership and supervisory skills should take on board in the civil service reform process and persistently empower public sector by giving appropriate skills to strengthen the creation of leadership skills and capabilities that are good enough to meet 21st-century challenges and opportunities.

The public sector has been criticised for its poor performance culture characterised by misaligned relationships and shared norms, beliefs, and values developed over time through both formal and informal performance management arrangements (refer to discussion in Chap. 7). Therefore, balancing the twin challenges of performance management and culture transformation in the public sector remains essential. Lack of or inadequate training and proper orientation in performance management, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, shortage of policies supporting the implementation process, poor communication in performance planning, poor feedback on performance and lack of employee involvement in the performance management system implementation culminate in a negative attitude to a performance management system. Public service should develop policies to enforce compliance, set a continuous feedback system that decreases bureaucracy, endorse long-term orientation, value creation linking rewards and performance, and strengthen the link between cost-effective integrated performance measurement and strategic objectives as cultural priorities across all levels of service. Adoption of a culture of performance management brings about an improved use of performance measurement systems. There is a need for flexibility within performance management systems that permit all players to contribute their views on how the system may be improved. The focus on conformity to results discourages innovation in the processes and ultimately negatively impacting on the drive for continuous process improvement. Lack of consultation amongst policy developers, implementation officers and the employees affect the implementation of the performance management system in public sector settings. The study, therefore, concludes that effective communication is a central pillar that must be emphasised at every stage of the performance management cycle for the public sector agencies. Employees need to be primarily engaged from the performance planning stage, in setting clear measurable and result oriented performance objectives. Lack of technical skill to professionally apply principles of performance management need to be put in the policy reform agenda. The government need to avail adequate resources required in implementing the regulatory performance management system to realise positive outcomes in the immediate future.

There is a strong proposal that Result Based management approaches if grounded properly would help public sector agencies to quickly transform and achieve desired performance culture. However, the employees must first believe and understand the employer's commitment to link performance and pay. Unless the public sector can

reward high performers, those engaged would take performance management as a negative tool used to only fulfil policy requirements if not to punish the lazy employees. The study in chapter seven found strong support for the proposition that performance management and culture transformation in the public sector is mainly influenced by external, institutional, and structural, leadership and management, fiscal, technical, cultural, and behavioural factors. The public need to continuously review its policy positions using evidence-based approaches and sustain human resources management decisions in order to align performance culture essential to address contemporary challenges.

Chapter 8 explored the gaps in the implementation of training and learning approaches in the case of Zimbabwe public sector, systematically establishing failure or critical success factors influencing training and development. Workforce training and learning is the cornerstone in the use of human capital development tools vital for public service growth and productivity in the twenty-first century. Public sector training lacks clarity in implementing the widely proposed systematic process in designing training and development. Most of the development partners no longer prefer supporting the human resources components especially meeting wages and salaries including training costs which are believed to be obligations of the government as the employer. To effectively coordinate training and development activities, the public sector needs to direct all its efforts from a national policy perspective. The fragmentation of policy approaches on training negatively affects the attainment of essential skills that can match the needs of the economy in the government transformation mantra.

The adoption of scientific tools to drive evidence-based training strategies would be essential to direct training efforts. Accelerated efforts in expanding partnerships in the training of the workforce will support meeting long term public sector human capital development goals and envisaged outcomes. Equally, the public sector organizations need to invest in building capacity in conducting training needs identification amongst the human resources practitioners in all government departments. The government must take a conscious step to adopt a policy movement that guides all human resources departments sector-wide to mandatorily conduct training needs identification. The policy must go with adequate resource commitment as identification of training would assist different sectors to effectively contribute to the achievement of national development. The COVID-19 pandemic grossly affected the planning, implementation and evaluation of training and the overall development of the workforce as the government struggles to comply with the COVID-19 social protection guidelines. The public sector agencies need to begin utilizing technology, such as learning management systems (LMS), to turbo-charge the learning experience effectively. This may demand a change in the policy strategy to embrace the contemporary demands posed by social disasters such as COVID-19. For training and development to be effective, the public sector needs to timeously conduct impact evaluation exercises on training and development programs including assessing the value of training on service delivery. Training evaluation can be outsourced for it to be effective, however, the government must be committed to supporting addressing any deficiencies revealed from the evaluation exercise. The study concludes that the

public sector agencies in low resource settings need to invest in building efficiencies in conducting training needs identification to expose the gaps essential in supporting national development plans.

Public sector organisations are faced with a critical skills gap to effectively drive the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisations and the solution lies on implementation of Strategic human resources management. The concept of Strategic Human Resource Management (refer to Chap. 9) is central in enhancing the performance of public sector organisations as it enhances the effectiveness and productivity of the organisations towards the attainment of national development goals. Therefore, the concept of SHRM becomes relevant in enhancing the HR planning of the public sector employees so that they effectively deal with the challenges faced in terms of human capital management.

Addressing workforce public productivity through human resources outsourcing (refer to Chap. 10) is one of the major contemporary HR approaches trusted to transform public sector entities. There is need for the public sector to introduce a deliberate policy of mandatory outsourcing of human resources functions when appointing high-level grades. In addition, the public sector needs to build strong public–private partnerships in building and implementing outsourcing functions within the public sector. The policymakers in the local government field should consider outsourcing the recruitment of senior management posts to private players. Private HR specialists can attract experienced and competent personnel and timeously fill the vacant posts. However, the collaborations may need a strong budget commitment from the Treasury to support a highly productive public sector workforce. There must be a clear reason or justification for outsourcing, considering the transactional costs involved, clear goals and outsourcing strategies, differentiation of core and non-core functions, availability of funding, and availability of contract management knowledge and skills. At the national level, the government should enact a mandatory outsourcing policy to uproot subjectivity tendencies.

The occupational health and safety measures in the public sector to determine their adequacy in ensuring the wellbeing of the employees in the working environment. The occupational health and safety measures in the public sector are inadequate (refer to detail in Chap. 11) thus lacks a comprehensive and harmonized occupational health and safety legal framework. Improving workplace safety and health is key to organizational development and sustainability. Training may offer some potential in helping support learning, behaviour change and is consistent with feedback and development approaches used in the public sector training is an integral part of risk management for risk identification and communication between all the stakeholders including management, technical and safety personnel.

As a way forward, Human capital management is revolving hence practitioners in the public sector need to adopt a continuous capacity building approach and learning culture to detect early the HRM challenges emerging. The public sector has a potential to transform its practices and processes to equally compete with the entities especially the private sector, if there is a policy shift and commitment from leadership to prioritise human capital management as the key pillar in service delivery.