

**DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SECTOR IN  
KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Water sector institutions have best policies but results of all institutions are not rewarding in accordance to long term objectives. Developing and having policy alone is not enough. Implementation of policy is more important than formulation. Even an effectively developed policy that reflects the hard choices an organization must make is worthless if it is not implemented. Although numerous studies acknowledge that policies fail not because of inadequate policy formulation, but because of insufficient policy implementation. Policy implementation is better for everyone including those with an eye on corporation profits. Not only are the prescribed fines for breach a real deterrent, but employees pursuing a claim in a tribunal if they think that their employer has not implemented policies properly at work place. Persistent complaints of poor management have been attributed to lack of proper policy implementation in Water Resources Management sectors in Kenya. This study sought to investigate determinants of implementation of*

*human resource management policies in Water Resources Management Sectors. The study used descriptive design and targeted management cadre staff in water Resources Management sector. Stratified and simple random sampling was done across water sector and institutions. Data was collected using a questionnaire with Likert-type, closed and open-ended questions and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as graphs and percentages was used to interpret data. Correlation and regression was used to establish the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable and conclusions together with recommendations made. The study found that Organizational Leadership, Organizational Communication, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Structure had a positive influence on implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya.*

**Key words:** Leadership, Communication, Culture and Organizational Structure

## **Background of the Study**

Policies have been the engine of management in organizations (Mayhew, 2013). Public sector organizations have best policies but results of most organizations are not rewarding in accordance to long term objectives. Developing and having policy alone is not enough. Implementation of policy is more important than formulation (Cappelli, 2008). Even an effectively developed policy that reflects the hard choices an organization must make is worthless if it is not implemented. Numerous studies acknowledge that policies fail not because of inadequate policy formulation, but because of insufficient policy implementation. Human Resource Management (HRM) policies provide guidelines on how key aspects of people management should be handled (Mayhew, 2013). According to Armstrong (2009) the aim of policy implementation is to ensure that any HRM issues are dealt with consistently in accordance with the values of the organization in line with certain defined policies. Stahl and Bjorkman (2006) explains that the overall HRM policy defines how the organization fulfils its social responsibilities for its employees and how it sets out its attitudes towards them. That's why corporate leaders have to develop rules. To develop consistency, fairness and points of reference, leaders formalize rules and guidelines into written policies.

The range of legal obligations placed on employers with respect to policy implementation is extensive. The particular obligations which apply in any given case depend on the activities carried out by the organization. Mayhew (2013) stresses that it is clear that policy implementation is better for everyone including those with an eye on corporation profits. Not only are the prescribed fines for breach a real deterrent, but employees pursuing a claim in a tribunal if they think that their employer has not implemented policies properly at work place. Whether or not there are a reduced number of inspectors enforcing the rules, unruly employers are vulnerable in constructive claims for breach of the fundamental HRM polices. Failure to implement such a policy lands some employer in court with an employee lawsuit, especially those who turn a blind eye to the problem (Itika, 2011).

## **Global Perspective of Policy Implementation**

Globally, the major difference between HRM policies implementation in the USA and policies in Western Europe is the degree to which HRM is influenced and determined by state regulations. The role of the state has influence on HR policy, particularly in factors such as job security. In

Europe it is typical for governments to be major employers in their own right, since the public sector forms a substantial proportion of the total economy, for example in Sweden., and many governments subsidize these jobs extensively (Cappelli, 2008). Torrington and Tylor (2008) asserts that HRM policies serve as reference points when employment practices are being developed, and when decisions are made about people.

### **Regional Perspective of Policy Implementation**

In developing countries, HRM policy implementation defines philosophies and values that the organizations attach to employees. For instance, South Africa allows an organization to be open with employees about the rules and regulations on: The nature of the organization; what they should expect from the organization; what the organization expects of them as well as how policies and procedures work. Others include what are acceptable and unacceptable behavior and the consequences of unacceptable behavior (Torrington et al., 2008)

### **Kenyan Perspective of Policy Implementation in Water Sector**

Since independence the main objective of the Ministry of water and Irrigation in Kenya was to achieve positive development by means of policy instruments that are adapted to the current challenges. To date there is still talk from water sector institutions of the same important issues which ought to have been dealt with long time ago. The failures of these policies lead to the failures of their implementations (Mbaka et al., 2013). The government is perceived to be the main player to manage water resources, thereby assuming the responsibility of both financing and management of the services. Water sector in Kenya strongly believe in building and maintaining a workforce best suited to effectively and efficiently accomplishes its mission and strategic objectives (Jensen, 2010). The Manuals lays out the basic principles for the management and development of the water sector human resources. No formal organization can exist and function well without formal 'rules of engagement' in managing people. These are general guidelines that express how the management intends to manage people and what is expected of employees in the workplace (Armstrong, 2006).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Successful implementation of HRM Policies and achieving competitive edge has always been a challenging goal for water resources management sector in Kenya (Jensen, 2010). Since independence, the Kenyan Water Sector has gone through several phases, which were affected by the prevailing politics, the natural environment and external support but above all, by rapid population growth. Insufficient capacity, confusion of roles, donor driven projects, weak fiscal control and centralized service delivery has led to deteriorating water supply systems, low sanitation coverage and wanton abuse of the water resource (Grafton et al., 2011). The findings of this study will be invaluable to water management sector by equipping them with adequate tools to get the solutions to the problems posed by the identified variables thereby creating healthy relationships within Water sector.. A myriad of factors can potentially affect the process of implementation and therefore the study sought to find out determinants of effective policy implementation in water management sector in Kenya.

### **Theoretical Review**

McLean (2011) defined a theory as a statement of relations among concepts within a set of boundary assumptions and constraints. A theory is based upon a hypothesis and backed by evidence. A theory presents a concept or idea that is testable. A theory is a fact-based framework for describing a phenomenon. In psychology, theories are used to provide a model for understanding human thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Cherry, 2015). According to Olum (2004) a theory is a systematic grouping of interdependent concepts and principles that give a framework to or tie together a significant area of knowledge. Theory explains how some aspect of human behavior or performance is organized. It thus enables us to make predictions about that behavior. The theories on policy implementation used in this study include; Management Theory on Communication, Organizational Culture, Theory Classical theory of organizational Structure and the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory.

### **Management Theory on Communication**

Management theorist Henri Fayol (1900) in his management theory believed that by focusing on managerial practices and communication, he could minimize misunderstandings and increase efficiency in organizations. He enlightened managers on how to accomplish their managerial duties, and the practices in which they should engage. Fayol outlined his theory of general

management and communication which he believed could be applied to the administration of myriad industries. His concern was with the administrative apparatus (or functions of administration), and to that end he presented his administrative theory, that is, principles and elements of management.

McLean (2011) asserts that high-level managers must work to harmonize all the activities to facilitate organizational success. Communication is the prime coordinating mechanism. Synchronizes the elements of the organization and must take into account delegation of authority and responsibility and span of control within units. The final element of management involves the comparison of the activities of the personnel to the plan of action; it is the evaluation component of management. According to Almashaqba et al. (2010) high-level managers must monitor function that evaluates quality in all areas and detects potential or actual deviations from the organization's plan, ensuring high-quality performance and clear communication satisfactory results while maintaining an orderly and problem-free environment. Controlling includes information management, measurement of performance, and institution of corrective actions.

### **Organizational Culture Theory**

Edgar Schein (1988) on Organizational Culture Theory adopts the functionalist view and described culture as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. Luthans et al. (2015) asserts that culture of an organization represents certain predefined policies which guide the employees and give them a sense of direction at the workplace. The culture decides the way employees interact at their workplace. Schein (1988) advanced the idea that organizations often have very differing cultures as well as subcultures. Although a company may have its "own unique culture", in larger organizations there are sometimes co-existing or conflicting subcultures because each subculture is linked to a different management team (Ravasi et al., 2006).

According to Zhang (2009) culture is the most difficult organizational attribute to change, outlasting organizational products, services, founders and leadership and all other physical attributes of the organization. Senior management may try to determine a corporate culture and

may wish to impose corporate values and standards of behavior that specifically reflect the objectives of the organization. In addition, there is also an extant internal culture within the workforce. Organizational rewards can imply one organizational norm but at the deepest level imply something completely different (Luthans et al., 2015). This insight offers an understanding of the difficulty that organizational newcomers have in assimilating organizational culture and why it takes time to become acclimatized. It also explains why organizational change agents usually fail to achieve their goals: underlying tacit cultural norms are generally not understood before would-be change agents begin their actions. Work-groups within the organization have their own behavioral quirks and interactions which, to an extent, affect the whole system (Ravasi et al., 2006).

### **Classical theory of organizational Structure**

Max Weber (1947) in his classical theory of organization which evolved at the dawn of the 20th Century presents a merger of scientific management and administrative theory. Max Weber stressed on the need of reducing ambiguity and diversity in organizations. Weber's focus was on how an organization should establish clear and formal authority channels and control dynamics. According to Weber (2012) the Weberian bureaucracy emphasized the ultimate need for an organizational structure of power that was hierarchical. Robbins et al. (2007) asserts that within an organization that operates under bureaucratic standards, the members were better off due to the heavy regulation and detailed structure. Not only does bureaucracy make it much more difficult for arbitrary and unfair personal favors to be carried out, it also means that promotions and hiring was generally done completely by merit. His rationale comes from the knowledge that the strict methods of administration and legitimate forms of authority associated with bureaucracy act to eliminate human freedom. Communication in the bureaucratic system should be formal and follow the chain of command. According to Weber, the ideal bureaucracy should place primary emphasis on the goals of the organization and put individual interests secondary to organizational productivity (Amaral et al., 2007). This theory supports researchers study as it believes in managerial practices that are the key to implementing policies as well as predictability and efficiency in organizations. Weber's views on bureaucracy provide important insight into process efficiency, division of labor, and hierarchy of authority hence the need by the researcher to determine how organizational structure affects HRM policy implementation.

### **The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory**

The Hersey-Blanchard (1970) situational Leadership theory is based on the amount of direction (task behavior) and amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must provide given the situation and the "level of maturity" of the followers. Maturity is the willingness and ability of a person to take responsibility for directing his or her own behavior. People tend to have varying degrees of maturity, depending on the specific task, function, or objective that a leader is attempting to accomplish through their efforts (George, 2006). According to Dasborough (2006) to determine the appropriate leadership style to use in a given situation, the leader must first determine the maturity level of the followers in relation to the specific task that the leader is attempting to accomplish through the effort of the followers. As the level of followers' maturity increases, the leader should begin to reduce his or her task behavior and increase relationship behavior until the followers reach a moderate level of maturity. As the followers begin to move into an above average level of maturity, the leader should decrease not only task behavior but also relationship behavior.

Hersey (2008) asserts that what an individual actually does when acting as a leader is in large part dependent upon characteristics of the situation in which he functions. This theory assumes that different situations call for different characteristics; according to this group of theories, no single optimal psychographic profile of a leader exists. This theory argues that the leader's main job is to see that whatever is necessary to group needs is taken care of; thus, a leader can be said to have done their job well when they have contributed to group effectiveness and cohesion (George, 2006).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was designed to establish the determinants of effective implementation of HRM policies in water sector in Kenya. The target population was 986The study used stratified random sampling according to management levels of the 30 institutions of water top management staff in water sector in Kenya.

#### **Data Analysis**



Multiple Regression Analysis was used to show the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The model that was tested was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (policy implementation),

$\beta_0$  is the constant of the model

$X_1$  is Leadership

$X_2$  is Communication

$X_3$  is Culture

$X_4$  is Organizational Structure

### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis of a five point Likert scale (: **SA**—Strongly Agree, **A** –Agree, **N**-Neutral, **D**-Disagree, **SD**- Strongly Disagree) was used to find out whether policy implementation can be determined by Leadership, communication, culture and structure. When asked whether Policy implementation is a top priority activity in this organization majority (83.6%) disagreed, (8.2%) were neutral while (8.1%) agreed. These echoed findings by Vermeeren (2006) in a study titled ‘Diversity in HRM Implementation and its Effect on Performance demonstrated how there is a symbiotic relationship between employees’ perceptions of HRM and their line manager’s leadership behavior on implementing HRM policies. **Regression analysis**

The R-squared in this study was .869. The Researcher applied the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 21) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the linear regression for the study. From the regression findings, the substitution of the equation ( $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4$ ) becomes:

$$Y = 7.234 + 0.872X_1 + 0.863X_2 + 0.725X_3 + 0.786X_4$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (implementation of Human Resource Management Policies),  $X_1$  is the Organizational Leadership variable,  $X_2$  is the Organizational Communication variable,  $X_3$  is Organizational Culture variable and  $X_4$  the Organizational Structure variable.

According to the intercept ( $\beta_0$ ), when the four independent variables, (Organizational Leadership, Organizational Communication, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Structure) are held constant at zero according to the equation, the overall implementation of Human Resource Management Policies findings show that, a unit increase in Organizational Leadership will lead to a 0.973 increase in implementation of Human Resource Management

Policies; a unit increase in Organizational Communication will lead to a 0.936 increase in implementation of Human Resource Management Policies; a unit increase in Organizational Culture will lead to a 0.761 increase in implementation of Human Resource Management Policies; and a unit increase in Organizational Structure will lead to a 0.883 increase in implementation of Human Resource Management Policies. This implies that the most significant factor is Organizational leadership followed by Organizational communication. All the variables were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that Organizational Leadership, Organizational Communication, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Structure had a positive influence on implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya. The study noted that organizational leadership to be the major contributor towards realization of implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya. Organizational leadership determines the uniqueness and competitiveness of organization performance and this plays a key role in determining the state of implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya. The study brought out the salient role of information and explanations in enhancing policy implementation in the Water Resources Management Sector in Kenya through communication. Communication is considered an essential intangible resource in modern organizations without which a passion for implementing policies for excellence must not prevail. Likewise Organizational structure and culture determines the uniqueness and competitiveness of organizations and this plays a key role in determining the state of implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya. The institution has control systems to measure and track the execution of HRM policy implementation and policies have been the engine of management in organizations therefore The institution needs successful implementation of HRM policies in order for employees to feel that they are treated equally. This determines how fast decisions are made-which in turn determines how fast the staff responds to client's needs.

### **Areas for Further Studies**

The study recommends further research on leadership skills and how leadership influences policy implementation in other public sectors and strategies on how to apply leadership when hiring new staffs and instilled in the existing employees. The implication of right leadership according to this study is the improved performance of Water Resources Management sector in Kenya and more so influences policy implementation positively.

Further the study recommends putting in place the right Organizational Structure for the Water Resources Management sector since the Organizational Structure significantly affect policy implementation. The Water Resources Management sector in Kenya should also inculcate the right Organizational culture so as to succeed in policy implementation which will help attract investor's hence promoting business growth. Since organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders. In addition, organizational culture may affect how much employees identify with an organization.

The study was done so as to establish determinants of effective implementation of Human Resource Management Policies in Water Resources Management sector in Kenya. Further research should be carried out to find out other determinants of effective implementation of HRM policies in other sectors, and further to establish the significance of policy implementation in public organizations.



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