

THE EFFECT OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING ON STAFF ACQUISITION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN KENYA

Ambrose Lochokwe¹ & Dr. Weldon Ng'eno Kibet, PhD²

¹ Master Student, Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

² Lecturer, Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the effect of human resource planning on staff acquisition in county governments of Kenya. The study used a quantitative approach where a descriptive research design was employed as the study sought to describe what, where, when, and who concerning the variables of the study. Stratified random sampling enhances the representativeness of the sample and reduces the likelihood of sampling errors. The study, through a census, sampled all 94 chief executive officers and the chairs of the CPSB from the 47 counties in Kenya. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were conducted with the help of SPSS, while multiple regression analysis was used to perform inferential statistics to establish the relationship between human resource planning and staff acquisition in Kenyan county governments. The study established a significant relationship ($P < .05$) between human resource planning and the staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya. The study recommended that the recruitment strategies of CPSBs should be aligned with the organization's strategic objectives and workforce needs and that CPSBs need to regularly review and update recruitment practices based on data analysis and feedback. Additionally, staff acquisition by CPSBs in all the counties should be designed in such a way that addresses the county's long-term strategic objectives.

Key Words: Human Resource Planning, CPSB, Staff Acquisition, County Governments.

INTRODUCTION

Staff acquisition is the process of sourcing, attracting, selecting, and onboarding new employees to meet an organization's workforce needs. Staff acquisition involves getting the needed human resources, which includes individuals or groups assigned to and working in order to meet the organization's objectives (Ahmad and Schroeder, 2017). Effective staff acquisition is vital for organizational growth and success and ensures that the organization has the right talent to achieve its goals, remain competitive, and adapt to changing business environments (Mitchell and Bray, 2015).

Effective staff acquisition can only be met through proper human resource planning (HRP), which is a strategy that organizations use to maintain a steady supply of skilled employees while avoiding staffing shortages or surpluses. Globally, across many organizations, HRP has helped in the acquisition of the right staff in order to meet short-term staffing challenges while adapting to changing conditions in the business environment over the longer term (Sarinah and Thabah, 2016). Like many private and public organizations across Europe, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, in order to position their departments, has been engaged in effective workforce planning to ensure that the departments acquire the right and adequate staff for better service delivery (Bal, Bozkurt, and Ertemsir, 2017).

Strategic human resources planning has had a positive influence on organizational staff acquisition in public shareholding companies in Jordan, as organizations ensure proper acquisition of necessary staff (Al-Qudah, Obeidat, and Mohammed, 2020). HR planning continues to be critical in ensuring the right and adequate staff are hired by the organization to deliver on its goals and objectives. Nakyeyune (2024) noticed that Wamuco Motors Limited in Uganda has achieved higher efficiency, better employee engagement, and stronger market positioning as the company continues to properly hire the right staff. Locally, Ngui *et al.* (2018) recommended that banks should develop and document strategies for human resource planning so as to enhance employee and organizational performance through acquisition of the right staff. Additionally, most counties in Kenya are currently facing conspicuous challenges of acquiring, attracting, and retaining qualified personnel, despite many having a good human resource strategic plan (Roba, Wachira, and Mwend, 2024). Therefore, establish the effect of human resource planning on employees' recruitment in county government in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Staff acquisition is an important function for government institutions globally, ensuring that the right personnel are in place to deliver public services effectively. The devolved governments were aimed at bringing the government services close to the people, and therefore having the right staff is critical. County Public Service Boards of every county in Kenya are responsible for the acquisition of their staff and can only achieve it through effective human resource planning (Omondi, 2019). Notably, while decentralization was intended to enhance responsiveness and flexibility in staffing at the county level, many CPSBs face challenges in effectively acquiring staff, with inadequate human resource planning blamed for these issues (Meyer-Sahling *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, this study seeks to establish the effect of human resource planning on employees' recruitment in county government in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

This study established the effect of human resource planning on staff acquisition process in County Governments in Kenya. This study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To determine the Human Resource Planning resource (HRP) in county governments in Kenya.
- To establish staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya.
- To establish the effect Human Resource Planning resource (HRP) on the recruitment process in county governments in Kenya.

Study Theory

Staff recruitment theory

Staff recruitment theory focuses on understanding and optimizing the process of attracting, selecting, and hiring employees, encompassing various approaches like the matching model, signaling theory, and ASA theory to ensure the right talent is acquired. Although the origin of the theory cannot be attributed to any individual, the origins of staff recruitment theory can be traced back to ancient Tamil literature (Thirukkural) in India, which explored recruitment and selection concepts and the evolution of recruitment practices. Further development of the theory can be attributed to Dunnette's Recruitment Theory (1976), Breaugh, Macan, and Grambow's Five-Stage Model, and Schneider's Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) Theory. In applying the theory to the study, the theory helps in understanding and optimizing the process of attracting, selecting, and hiring employees by the CPSBs in each of the counties in order for the organization to have the right staff to deliver the organization's goals and objectives.

Human Resource Planning (HRP) theory

Human Resource Planning (HRP) theory focuses on aligning workforce needs with organizational goals by forecasting future labor demand and supply, identifying skill gaps, and developing strategies to ensure the right people are in the right roles at the right time. The theory can be traced back to the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, with figures like Robert Owen and Charles Babbage emphasizing the importance of employee well-being and productivity. Later, the scientific management approach of Frederick Taylor and the human relations movement, including the Hawthorne studies, further shaped the field. In relation to the study, the theory can help the CPSBs in each of the counties to align workforce needs with organizational goals by forecasting future labor demand and supply, identifying skill gaps, and developing strategies to ensure the right people are in the right roles at the right time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource planning resources (HRP) remain critical in having the right staff to deliver on the organization's objective, the heart of the organization, and the recruitment process and are the backbone of the organization. Without human resource planning and effective employment policy, no organization can attain success and development (Sarwary, Faizi, and Banayee, 2022). In the U.S., across many sectors, effective human resource planning (HRP) significantly impacts employee recruitment by enabling organizations to anticipate future workforce needs, attract the right talent, and improve the overall recruitment process, ultimately leading to better organizational performance. In India, a study by Sarinah and Thabab (2016) established that effective human resource planning (HRP) significantly impacts employee recruitment by enabling organizations to forecast future workforce needs, ensuring the right skills are available, and facilitating a more strategic and efficient recruitment process.

Effective human resource planning, particularly in terms of workforce demand projection and recruitment and selection, enables institutions to attract the right talent in the appropriate numbers. Ubah and Ibrahim (2021) advised enhancing employee expertise, talents, and abilities, thereby improving organizational performance in Nigeria's public sector. In Delta State, evidence from a study by Okwuise, Okwuise, and Akpomiemie (2023) indicated a significant relationship between various aspects of human resource planning, such as workforce forecasting, recruitment and selection, training and development, and employee retention, and organizational performance.

In Kenya, a study by Kipkoech (2022) established that there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between human resource planning, acquisition, and performance, as well as between selection practices and employee performance, within the Judicial Service Commission in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Additionally, another study by Kurniawan (2019) pointed out that HR planning practices did not only have a

significant relationship with staff selection, but HR planning practices also accounted for approximately 41.61% of the variance in having the right staff and therefore leading to service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative approach where a descriptive research design was employed as the study sought to describe what, where, when, and who concerning the variables of the study. The study, through a census, sampled all 94 chief executive officers and the chairs of the CPSB from the 47 counties in Kenya. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were conducted with the help of SPSS, while multiple regression analysis was used to perform inferential statistics to establish the relationship between human resource planning and staff acquisition in Kenyan county governments.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Human Resource Planning and Staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya

Human Resource Planning and Staff acquisition Factors	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Human Resource Planning			
The CPSB effectively plans for staff needs.	90	3.70	.785
Human resource planning aligns with the county's strategic objectives.	90	3.80	.877
The county government identifies current and future staffing needs well in advance.	90	2.80	.985
Workforce planning considers current skill gaps and future skill requirement	90	3.70	.785
Staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya			
Staff acquisition is aligned with the county's human resource needs.	90	3.70	1.106
The CPSB recruits staff with the necessary qualifications for county jobs.	90	4.07	1.006
The CPSB staff acquisition process is efficient and timely.	90	4.00	.636
Staff acquisition addresses the county's long-term strategic objectives.	90	4.11	1.021

The study indicates that the CPSB effectively plans for staff needs on a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 0.785. Results showed that human resource planning aligns with the county's strategic objectives, which registered a mean of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 0.877, and that the county government identifies current and future staffing needs well in advance, showing a mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 0.985. The results indicated that the workforce planning considers the qualifications of existing staff with a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 0.785. This showed that CPSB effectively plans for staff needs, and the planning is aligned with the county's strategic objectives, with the workforce planning considering the qualifications of existing staff and confirming that they meet their future human resource requirements. The county government also ensures that the human resource planning takes into account emerging skills and technologies and that it includes effective training and development programs in its human resource planning.

In terms of the staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya, the results indicated that staff acquisition is aligned with the county's human resource needs, which registered a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.106; the CPSB recruits staff with the necessary qualifications for county jobs, with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.006; and the CPSB staff acquisition process is efficient and timely, which registered a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.636. The results also revealed that staff acquisition addresses the county's long-term strategic objectives with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.021.

These results indicated that staff acquisition is aligned with the county's human resource needs, CPSB recruits staff with the necessary qualifications for county jobs, and the CPSB staff acquisition process is efficient and timely. The study also established that staff acquisition addresses the county's long-term strategic objectives.

Table 2: Effect of Human Resource Planning on the Staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya

Modern Summery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.849 ^a	.721	.711	.359

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	37.640	4	9.410	73.117	.000 ^b
Residual	14.543	85	.129		
Total	52.184	89			

a. Dependent Variable: Staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), CPSB effective planning ,HRP alignment to the county’s strategic objectives, Identification of current and future staffing needs advance, Consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirement

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		Std. Error		Beta		
Model		B	Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.367	.220		6.220	.000
	CPSB effective planning	.140	.091	.036	.435	.034
	HRP alignment to the county’s strategic objectives.	.118	.092	.155	1.287	.011
	Identification of current and future staffing needs advance.	.269	.057	.421	4.737	.000
	Consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirement	.394	.069	.595	5.694	.000

The coefficient determinant (R-squared) of .721 implies that 72.1% of the changes in staff acquisition in county governments in Kenya are explained by human resource planning factors (CPSB effective planning, HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives, identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, and consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements). The other 27.9% is attributed to other factors not included in the study other than Human Resource Planning Factors (CPSB effective planning, HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives, identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, and consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements).

The study also utilized the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test to assess whether the regression model is statistically significant. The output from the ANOVA test indicates a p-value that is less than 0.05 (Sig = .000 < .05) which shows that the model above is statistically significant in explaining the relationship between the human resource planning factors (CPSB effective planning, HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives, identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, and consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements) and staff acquisition in county governments in Kenya in this study. The (F=73.117; 4, 85) also showed that the model was statistically fit to measure the relationship between Human Resource Planning Factors (CPSB effective planning, HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives,

identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements) and the staff acquisition in county governments in Kenya.

The resulting regression equation from the coefficients.

$$Y = 1.367 + .140X_1 + .118X_2 + .269X_3 + .394X_4$$

The above equation can be interpreted as follows:

A unit change of .140 in CPSB effective planning, .118 in HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives, .269 in identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, and .394 in consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements will result in a unit change in staff acquisition in county governments in Kenya. The findings also indicate that the regression model ($\beta = 1.367$) is statistically significant ($\text{sig} = .000 < .05$). Further, the findings show that non-applicants' verification ($\text{Sig} = .000 < .05$) is statistically significant.

Discussion

The results indicated that CPSB effectively plans for staff needs and the planning is aligned with the county's strategic objectives, with the workforce planning considering the qualifications of existing staff, and confirm that the CPSB effectively plans for staff needs and the planning is aligned with the county's strategic objectives, with the workforce planning considering the qualifications of existing staff, and confirm that they meet their future human resource requirements. The results support findings by Ubah and Ibrahim (2021) that established that effective human resource planning, particularly in terms of workforce demand projection and recruitment and selection, enables institutions to attract the right talent in the appropriate numbers, enhancing employee expertise, talents, and abilities, thereby improving organizational performance and Roba *et al.* (2024) also concur, concurring that strategic HR planning practices accounted for approximately 41.61% of the variance in service delivery and therefore are critical in ensuring that the organization acquires the right staff. Additionally, the county government also ensures that the human resource planning takes into account emerging skills and technologies and that it includes effective training and development programs in its human resource planning.

Additionally, the study shows a significant relationship between human resource planning and the staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya. The significant importance of HRP and staff acquisition has been highlighted by a study by Okwuse *et al.* (2023) that indicated a significant relationship between human resource planning aspects such as recruitment and selection and organizational performance, while Kipkoech (2022) established a statistically significant correlation between human resource planning and acquisition and performance. Additionally, Kurniawan (2019) also established that HR planning practices accounted for approximately 41.61% of the variance in acquisition and therefore led to service delivery.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a significant relationship between human resource planning and the staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya. CPSB effective planning, HRP alignment to the county's strategic objectives, identification of current and future staffing needs in advance, and consideration of current skill gaps and future skill requirements all had a significant effect on the staff acquisition process in county governments in Kenya.

The study recommended that the recruitment strategies by CPSBs for county governments in Kenya should be aligned with the organization's strategic objectives and workforce needs and that CPSB needs to regularly review and update recruitment practices based on data analysis and feedback. Additionally, staff acquisition by CPSBs in all the counties should be designed in such a way that it addresses the county's long-term strategic objectives.

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