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HOW TALENT MANAGEMENT INFLUENCES PERFORMANCE OF SUPERMARKETS IN WESTERN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

One major issue faced by supermarkets worldwide is poor business succession planning, which complicates the transfer of leadership, ownership, and management. In Kenya, this challenge is prevalent, with many supermarkets grappling with succession issues. Management problems have contributed to a decline in actual performance, dropping from 7% in 2019 to 6.7% in 2020. Although some studies have addressed business succession planning and performance, research specifically examining these practices in Western Kenya's supermarkets is limited. This study aimed to explore the relationship between talent management (independent variable) and supermarket performance (dependent variable) in Western Kenya. It was grounded in human capital theory, job characteristic theory, and social exchange theory. Using descriptive and explanatory research designs, the study targeted 193 staff, including managerial and technical departmental heads from 62 fully licensed supermarkets in the region. A sample size of 130 was obtained through simple random sampling with the Yamane formula. The study ensured content validity by reassessing the relevance of the data collection tools and construct validity by capturing all constructs in the framework. Reliability was tested using a Cronbach alpha of 0.7. A structured questionnaire collected quantitative data, analyzed with SPSS Software version 22 using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that talent management had a moderate positive effect on supermarket performance. The conclusion emphasized the need for organizations to prioritize effective talent management practices to enhance performance. Recommendations included the implementation of talent management strategies and job rotation programs, providing a foundation for further research on this topic among scholars and

academicians.

Key Words: Talent Management, Talent Management Practices, Performance of Supermarkets, Western Kenya

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A significant issue faced by supermarkets globally is the transfer of leadership, ownership, and management (Astrachan, Klein & Symronois, 2019). Business succession planning (BSP) involves identifying and preparing suitable employees through mentoring, training, and job rotation to replace key players in an organization (Rodrigo, 2017). According to Dunemann & Barret (2018), BSP focuses on identifying key leadership and intellectual talent needs over time, preparing individuals for current and future responsibilities. This paper adopts Rodrigo's definition due to its comprehensive constructs. Historically, businesses replaced key employees instead of developing them, making it challenging to swiftly onboard competent staff. Over time, organizations have realized they can cultivate future leaders internally through succession planning (Groves, 2013). In today's competitive and dynamic environment, succession planning is essential at all levels of an organization. Employees must be nurtured for their general competencies and leadership potential to ensure business growth and survival. Currently, many senior positions are occupied by staff nearing mandatory retirement, with few successors developed, highlighting the urgency of preparing employees for smooth transitions (Cheng, 2016). Succession planning, once viewed as a cost, is now recognized as an investment essential for continuity in a competitive landscape. Formal business succession planning began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, focusing initially on top management and ownership. This reflects the historical neglect of succession planning's critical role in organizational success (Pandey & Sharma, 2014). Nonetheless, in Western Kenya, the link between business succession planning and organizational performance has been underexplored, pointing to the need for further research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the significant challenges faced by supermarkets worldwide is the effective transfer of leadership ownership and management (Astrachan *et al*., 2019). This issue is particularly evident within the Kenyan context, where a survey of supermarkets revealed that 78.3% of the respondents reported experiencing ongoing leadership, ownership, and management disputes, often without a clear succession plan in place. These management challenges have destabilized operations, yet the underlying causes of these disruptions remain ambiguous. Notably, during the years 2019 and 2020, the actual performance of these supermarkets witnessed a decline from 7% to 6.7%, highlighting the urgent need for effective managerial strategies. Furthermore, the relationship between talent management and organizational performance has been underexplored in the context of supermarkets in Western Kenya. While previous studies in Kenya have examined various elements of talent management—such as attracting, developing, and retaining employees through effective recruitment, performance management, and continuous learning—these investigations have often focused on sectors other than retail (Adhiambo, 2014 and Odengo, 2016). For instance, Adhiambo’s (2014) research on health care services in Kisumu emphasized succession planning without addressing the direct impact of talent management practices on supermarket performance in Western Kenya. Similarly, Akinyele (2015) analyzed succession planning with a focus on training and job satisfaction but did not ascertain the influence of job rotation on performance in the supermarket sector. Odengo’s (2016) examination of the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) explored career development and performance appraisal but fell short of establishing how mentoring practices specifically affect performance. Given that none of these studies have systematically investigated the relationship between talent management and organizational performance in the supermarket context of Western Kenya, this study aims to fill these significant gaps.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to examine the influence of talent management on performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya.

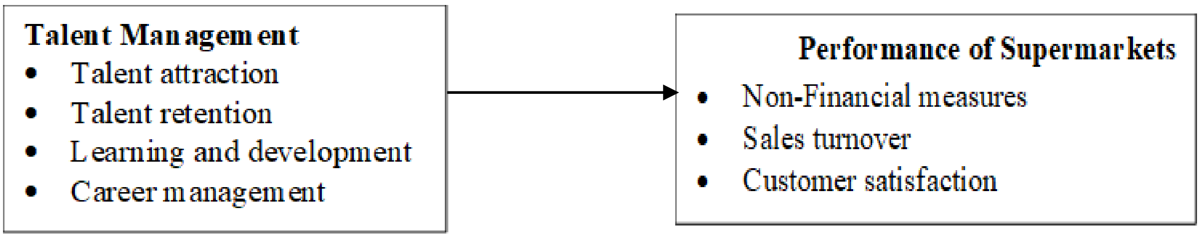
THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, articulated by Penrose (1959) and expanded by Jay Barney (1991), emphasizes the importance of internal resources for achieving competitive advantage, particularly in supermarkets. RBV highlights the vital role of unique internal resources, especially human capital, in enhancing organizational performance. By effectively managing talent, supermarkets can distinguish themselves in a crowded marketplace. A key strength of RBV is its focus on sustainable competitive advantage, encouraging investments in human capital to foster innovation and capabilities. For example, supermarkets in Western Kenya can thrive by cultivating unique employee skills and a strong workplace culture. However, RBV has limitations; it often overlooks external factors such as market dynamics and technological changes that significantly influence performance, potentially leading organizations to miss opportunities for external collaboration.

Human Capital Theory, developed by Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961), asserts that individuals' skills and knowledge are valuable economic assets. This theory aligns with talent management practices in supermarkets, demonstrating that investments in employee training yield substantial returns in performance. Structured onboarding and continuous training help employees adapt to the competitive retail landscape. A major strength of Human Capital Theory is its clear link between investment in employee development and economic outcomes, legitimizing expenditures on training. However, it can oversimplify the complexities of human value by reducing individuals to mere economic units, thus neglecting factors like job satisfaction and engagement. Additionally, it may not fully consider the dynamic nature of labor markets and the impact of external influences on human capital value.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**



EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The study by Talent and Subramaniam (2020) used a quantitative research design, employing structured questionnaires distributed to employees of various Malaysian multinational companies. This approach facilitated a comprehensive statistical analysis of correlations between talent management variables and organizational outcomes. Significant positive correlations were found, notably between talent attraction and organizational success (correlation of 0.543, p-value of 0.000) and between talent retention and organizational success (correlation of 0.684, p-value of 0.000). The findings emphasized the importance of a company's values and image in attracting talent. Conversely, Poorhosseinzader (2020) critiqued this perspective, arguing that organizational performance should not solely be measured by success but should also consider other vital indicators like profitability, sales, employee morale, and productivity. Khalid (2020) examined talent management's impact on organizational performance in Jordan's public health sector, surveying 430 public health workers across 30 hospitals. This study aimed to assess the moderating effect of a performance management system on the talent management-organizational performance relationship. Results indicated that while the performance management system positively moderated this relationship, management planning negatively affected performance outcomes. Conversely, positive correlations were identified between compensation and rewards, and training and development on performance. Notably, while previous studies primarily focused on developed economies like Jordan, this research compared the findings with supermarkets in Kenya, utilizing a smaller sample size of 193 respondents. The methodology involved surveys and regression techniques to analyze relationships among key variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, only an explanatory research design was employed to investigate the causal relationships between business succession planning practices, organizational culture, and performance in supermarkets, avoiding a combination with descriptive designs. While a descriptive research design could have offered a comprehensive overview of the current state of business succession planning practices, organizational culture, and performance through survey data collection, the explanatory design focused on the interactions and influences among these variables specifically within the context of Western Kenya. By utilizing structured questionnaires, the researcher gathered data and performed statistical analyses to assess how business succession planning practices and organizational culture affect supermarket performance. This approach aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play, elucidating the impact of these factors on performance outcomes in the supermarket sector of Western Kenya.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics of Talent Management and Performance of Supermarkets

This study aimed to examine the relationship between talent management and the performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Talent Management and Performance

Statement(s)	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. dev
The supermarket identifies and recruits talented individuals for key positions within the organization.	0.0% (0)	1.7% (2)	9.9% (12)	42.1% (51)	46.3% (56)	4.33	0.72
I am satisfied with the efforts made by the supermarket in providing appropriate training and development opportunities to enhance the skills and capabilities of its employees.	0.8% (1)	4.1% (5)	9.1% (11)	30.6% (37)	55.4% (67)	4.35	0.87
The supermarket has a structured performance management system in place that recognizes and rewards employees based on their talent and contributions.	0.0% (0)	2.5% (3)	7.4% (9)	34.7% (42)	55.4% (67)	4.43	0.74
The leadership of the supermarket provides adequate support and guidance in fostering a culture of talent retention and succession planning.	0.8% (1)	2.5% (3)	9.1% (11)	30.6% (37)	57.0% (69)	4.41	0.82
The supermarket promotes a positive work environment that encourages employee engagement and provides opportunities for career growth and advancement.	2.5% (3)	3.3% (4)	7.4% (9)	19.8% (24)	66.9% (81)	4.67	0.60
Average; n = 121	**Mean % = 88.8%; Mean score = 4.44**					**4.44**	**0.75**

Respondents expressed their views on five statements related to talent management using a 5-point Likert scale (SD - strongly disagree [1] to SA - strongly agree [5]). The computed results are presented in Table 1, offering insights into employees' perceptions of supermarket practices. Regarding the identification and recruitment of talented individuals for key positions, Agreement (A) and Strong Agreement (SA) responses comprised 88.4% (107 out of 121) of total responses, indicating that most respondents believe the supermarket effectively attracts skilled individuals. This suggests a positive perception of the supermarket's talent acquisition processes. In terms of satisfaction with training and development opportunities, Agreement (A) and Strong Agreement (SA) responses accounted for 85.9% (104 out of 121). This high level of satisfaction implies that the supermarket actively invests in enhancing employee skills and capabilities, which may positively affect performance and job satisfaction. For the existence of a structured performance management system that recognizes and rewards employee contributions, Agreement (A) and Strong Agreement (SA) responses reached 90.1% (109 out of 121). This indicates that employees perceive effective processes for recognizing their talents, thereby fostering motivation and retention. When evaluating leadership support for talent retention and succession planning, Agreement (A) and Strong Agreement (SA) responses represented 87.6% (106 out of 121). This suggests that employees view the supermarket's leadership as providing essential guidance in cultivating a supportive culture. Lastly, regarding the promotion of a positive work environment that encourages engagement and career growth, Strong Agreement (SA) responses accounted for 66.9% (81 out of 121), the highest level of agreement among the statements. This underscores the supermarket’s success in fostering an environment that enhances employee satisfaction, commitment, and a sense of belonging. Overall, the findings indicate that effective talent management practices in supermarkets contribute to improved employee performance and engagement in Western Kenya.

Descriptive Statistics on Performance of Supermarkets

The dependent variable of this study was performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya, its findings are as tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Performance

Statement(s)	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std dev
The overall performance of the supermarket is aligned with its strategic goals and objectives.	4.1% (5)	6.6% (8)	7.4% (9)	28.1% (34)	53.7% (65)	4.21	1.10
The supermarket consistently achieves high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.	0.8% (1)	5.0% (6)	9.9% (12)	35.5% (43)	48.8% (59)	4.26	0.89
The supermarket manages its financial resources and consistently achieves profitability.	0.0% (0)	5.8% (7)	9.9% (12)	38.8% (47)	45.4% (55)	4.23	0.86
The supermarket demonstrates agility and adaptability in responding to market changes and competition.	2.5% (3)	11.6% (14)	12.4% (15)	34.7% (42)	38.8% (47)	3.96	1.10
The supermarket fosters a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, leading to enhanced organizational performance.	1.7% (2)	8.3% (10)	9.9% (12)	37.2% (45)	43.0% (52)	4.12	1.00
Average; n = 121	**Mean % = 83.2%; Mean score = 4.16**					**4.16**	**0.99**

The survey results reveal a generally positive perception of the supermarket's performance and its alignment with strategic goals and objectives, as indicated by the high agreement scores. A significant majority of respondents strongly agreed (53.7%) and agreed (28.1%) that the overall performance of the supermarket is aligned with its strategic goals and objectives. This suggests that the supermarket has been successful in effectively executing its strategies to achieve desired outcomes. However, a small percentage of respondents (4.1% strongly disagree and 6.6% disagree) expressed a less favorable view, implying that there may be some areas that require attention and improvement to ensure better alignment between performance and strategic goals.

Customer satisfaction and loyalty were reported to be consistently high, with an overwhelming majority agreeing (48.8%) or strongly agreeing (35.5%) that the supermarket achieves high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. This positive sentiment highlights the supermarket's success in meeting customer expectations and maintaining customer loyalty. However, a small portion of respondents (0.8% strongly disagree and 5.0% disagree) expressed a less favorable opinion, suggesting the need for continuous efforts to improve customer satisfaction and foster stronger customer loyalty. Financial management and profitability were perceived positively, with a significant majority agreeing (45.4%) or strongly agreeing (38.8%) that the supermarket effectively manages its financial resources and consistently achieves profitability. This indicates that the supermarket maintains sound financial practices and has been successful in generating profits. It is worth noting that a small number of respondents (5.8% disagree and 9.9% not sure) expressed some reservations, highlighting the importance of ongoing financial management and performance monitoring.

When it comes to agility and adaptability in responding to market changes and competition, the responses were somewhat mixed. While a notable proportion of respondents agreed (34.7%) or strongly agreed (38.8%) that the supermarket demonstrates agility and adaptability, a significant portion expressed disagreement (11.6%) or uncertainty (12.4%). This suggests that there may be room for improvement in the supermarket's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to market dynamics and competitive challenges. Addressing these concerns can help the supermarket stay ahead in a rapidly changing business environment. Regarding the fostering of a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, the majority of respondents agreed (37.2%) or strongly agreed (43.0%) that the supermarket promotes such a culture, leading to enhanced organizational performance. This positive perception indicates that the supermarket emphasizes innovation and encourages its employees to continuously seek improvements. However, a small percentage of respondents (1.7% disagree and 8.3% not sure) expressed some reservations, suggesting the need for ongoing efforts to cultivate and sustain a culture of innovation.

Regression Results between Talent Management and Performance of Supermarkets

The objective of this study was to evaluate the relationship between talent management and performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya. It was hypothesized, *H_01: There was no relationship between talent management and performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya*. In order to examine the Hypothesis, the model $Y=\beta_0 + \beta_1X_1+ \varepsilon$ was fitted. Where Y is the dependent variable (performance of supermarkets supermarkets), 0 is the coefficient of regression, and ε is an error term. The model summary for the regression study between talent management and performance of supermarkets in Western Kenya is shown in Table 3. Changes in talent management explain 24.2% of performance of supermarkets, as measured by an R-squared value of 0.242. This implied that characteristics excluded from the model accounted for 75.8% of performance of supermarkets.

Table 3: Model Summary for Talent management and Performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.492[a]	0.242	0.236	0.59937	0.242	38.090	1	119	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Talent management

b. Dependent Variable: performance of supermarkets.

Source: Research Data (2023)

Table 4 below shows analysis on variance (ANOVA) showing the regression model between talent management and performance of supermarkets. The F test yielded a result of F (1,119) =38.090, p<0.05, indicating that the model adequately explains the variation in the dependent variable. The ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant relationship between talent management and the performance of supermarkets. This conclusion is supported by the significant F-statistic (F = 38.090) and a p-value of 0.000, which is below the conventional significance level of 0.05.

Table 4: ANOVA between Talent Management and Performance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	13.684	1	13.684	38.090	0.000[b]
1	Residual	42.751	119	0.359		
	Total	56.435	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of supermarkets

b. Predictors: (Constant), Talent Management

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of supermarkets; ***Source: Research Data (2023)***

The model's regression analysis explains a significant proportion of the variance in the performance of supermarkets, as indicated by the regression sum of squares (13.684) and the corresponding mean square value (13.684). This suggests that talent management has a substantial effect on supermarket performance. The residual sum of squares (42.751) represents the unexplained variance in the model, indicating that some factors beyond talent management may also influence supermarket performance. This could include other variables not included in the analysis or random variability that cannot be accounted for. The total sum of squares (56.435) represents the overall variability in the dependent variable (performance of supermarkets supermarkets). The regression sum of squares and the residual sum of squares together make up the total sum of squares, indicating that the model explains a significant portion of the total variability observed in supermarket performance. These ANOVA results have important implications for understanding the relationship between talent management and supermarket performance. The findings suggest that effective talent management practices can significantly contribute to improving the performance of supermarkets. This highlights the importance of investing in talent development, recruitment, and retention strategies to enhance overall organizational performance. Simple regression results are as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients between Talent Management and Performance

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.466	0.439		3.336	0.001
Talent Management	.606	0.098	0.492	6.172	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance of supermarkets

Source: Research Data (2023)

The constant term in the regression equation is 1.466. This represents the expected performance of supermarkets when the talent management variable is zero. The significant t-value (t = 3.336) and the p-value of 0.001 indicate that the constant term is statistically significant. This suggests that even without any talent management practices, there is a positive baseline performance level in the supermarkets. The coefficient for talent management is 0.606. This indicates that for every unit increase in talent management, the performance of supermarkets is expected to increase by 0.606 units. The standardized coefficient (beta) of 0.492 suggests that talent management has a moderate positive effect on supermarket performance after controlling for other factors in the model. Both the unstandardized coefficient (t = 6.172) and the standardized coefficient (beta = 0.492) for talent management are statistically significant, with p-values of 0.000. This indicates a strong relationship between talent management and supermarket performance, suggesting that talent management practices play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of supermarkets.

The significant coefficient for talent management indicates that implementing effective talent management practices can lead to improved performance in supermarkets. This highlights the importance of strategies related to talent acquisition, development, and retention in enhancing overall supermarket performance. The standardized coefficient (beta) of 0.492 suggests that talent management has a moderate positive impact on supermarket performance, even after accounting for other variables in the model. This implies that supermarkets that prioritize talent management are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes compared to those that do not. Regression model appeared as follows: $Y=\beta_0 + \beta_1X_1+ \varepsilon$
Based on the findings obtained, the model equation was: $Y=1.466 +0.606X_1$

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal a significant positive correlation between effective talent management practices and the performance of supermarkets in Kenya. Specifically, robust strategies for recruitment, development, and retention of employees contribute directly to organizational success. The strong regression coefficient and low p-value underscore the importance of investing in human capital, indicating that supermarkets that prioritize talent management can achieve enhanced performance outcomes. The analysis emphasizes the necessity for context-specific approaches to talent management, as the most effective practices can vary across regions and sectors. A structured and strategic talent management framework is vital; supermarkets should shift from ad hoc practices to comprehensive systems that promote best practices in acquisition, appraisal, and career advancement. Additionally, recognizing that talent management is just one of many factors influencing performance highlights the need for organizations to operate with a holistic view, integrating other elements like market conditions and operational efficiency. From a policy perspective, it is crucial for leaders and policymakers to prioritize investments in talent management, providing incentives for training and development initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study regarding the relationship between talent management practices and the performance of supermarkets in Kenya, several key recommendations emerge for enhancing organizational effectiveness:

First and foremost, supermarkets should prioritize the development and implementation of robust talent management systems. This involves creating comprehensive frameworks that encompass all facets of talent management, including recruitment, onboarding, training, performance appraisal, and retention strategies. By tailoring these systems to the unique context of the Kenyan retail landscape, organizations can maximize their impact on employee performance and overall business success. In addition to establishing effective systems, focusing on employee development is crucial. Supermarkets must invest in continuous learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and clear career advancement pathways. Such initiatives not only enhance employees' skill sets and knowledge but also contribute to job satisfaction, fostering a work environment where individuals feel valued and motivated. Moreover, adopting data-driven approaches to assess the effectiveness of talent management practices is essential. By leveraging data analytics, organizations can analyze performance metrics, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions that refine their talent strategies in alignment with business objectives.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Esther Nekesa Lufwarura wrote the entire research proposal guided and supervised by Dr. Kadian Wanyama and Dr. Ruth Mitalo. They got authorization from the Graduate School of Kibabii University and research permit from National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation, Kenya.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this Research Article. In addition, the ethical issues; including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/ or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy has been completely observed by the authors.

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