Assessment of HR Development and Utilization: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract: *Organizations, whether they be private, public or NGO, must operate among and in cooperation with people. This is especially true within the service sector such as public organizations. Because they are mainly labor intensive, they are judged on the basis of the performance of their human resources. This study develops a conceptual framework by which to assess the effectiveness of human resource (HR) development and utilization practices in the public sector. This study argues that the most important question for human resource development (HRD) professionals is not how many employees are trained/developed, but how they are trained/developed, retained, and utilized. HRD programs are necessary, but not sufficient, for effective HR management. Presupposing effective utilization of HRM initiatives is an important aspect of HRM, no discussion of HRD would be complete without considering the role of HR utilization. For better understanding of HRD and utilization within public service organizations, there is also a need to take into account the wider contexts within which they operate.*

Keywords: *HRD, Training, utilization, HRM, public sector organizations.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The effective and efficient use of limited resources calls for a skilled and competent workforce, among others. If an organization is to have a skilled and competent workforce, it must have effective Human Resource Development (HRD) programs (Mathis, Jackson, &Valentine 2014; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2015; Blanchard & Thacker, 2013; Werner & DeSimone, 2011). According to Casio & Aguinis (2011), the quality of a nation's workforce is a crucial determinant of its ability to successfully compete in a global market... Human Resource Management (HRM) underscores a belief that people truly make a significant difference; only people among other resources have the capacity to generate value (p. 9). Human resources can be sources for sustained competition. Mathis et al. (2014) further contend that "Human assets are the 'glue' that holds all the other assets together and guides their use to achieve results (p.4). Human resource (HR) practices are the direct investments on employees' human capital through which firms achieve competitive advantage and employees enhance their human capital (Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009: 226). According to Barney (1991), human resources can be sources for sustained competition as long as they meet three basic requirements: they add positive economic benefits to the process of producing goods and services; the skills of the workforce are distinguishable from those of competitors (e.g., through education and workplace training); and such skills are not easily duplicated. Stone (1998) further remarked that "HRM is either part of the problem or part of the solution in gaining the productive contribution of people" (p. 4). In other words, an HR system (the set of interrelated process designed to attract, develop, and maintain human resources) can either enhance or destroy this potential competitive advantage (Lado & Wilson, 1994 quoted in Casio & Aguinis, 2011:9).

Successful organizations attribute their past successes partly to the way they deal with their people (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Boxall, 2003; Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004; Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Berdi et al., 2008). This is especially true within the service sector such as public organizations. Because they are mainly labor intensive, they are judged on the basis of the performance of their human resources. Well trained and motivated workforces are the lifeblood of

an effective state (World Bank, 1997: 92). This study argues that the most important question for human resource development (HRD) professionals is not how many employees are trained/developed, but how they are trained/developed, retained, and utilized. Further, hiring the right person (both person/job and person/organization match) is necessary (Heneman, Judge, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2015: 15), but not sufficient. Presupposing effective utilization of HRM initiatives is an important aspect of HRM, no discussion of HRD would be complete without considering the role of HR utilization. This suggests that HR development and utilization are important aspects of HRM. That is, employees' competence (ability to do), motivation (willingness to work), conducive working condition (transfer of learning), and retention (willingness to stay) are crucial if organizations are to retain the maximum contribution from their employees and create organizational excellence.

This study presents a conceptual framework through which to assess the effectiveness of HRD and utilization practices in the public sector, i.e., to identify and show internal and external factors affecting HRD and utilization practices, which subsequently influences employee and organizational performance.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

We live in a complex and rapidly-changing world. As such, the public service sector experiences inescapable yet precipitous changes and the learning and developmental needs of public servants therefore evolve rapidly. To that end, the role of HRD programs in responding promptly and effectively to changes is essential for success (Kerrigan & Luke, 1987; Kirkpatrick&Kirkpatrick, 2006; Werner &DeSimone, 2011). This need has highlighted a crucial significance now in the context of globalisation. Thus, a foundational question is: *What do we mean by HRD?*

HRD has become a widely used term, but conceptions of the term vary widely. The broad notion of HRD, which is a subset of the grand theory of human development, includes not only education and training, but also access to sources of a degree of self-determination (Kelly, 2006; Werner &DeSimone, 2011). Within much of the business and management literature, the focus of HRD has been on the narrower objective of attaining or upgrading the skills and attitudes of employees at all levels in order to maximize the effectiveness of the enterprise (Kelly, 2006). HRD as a theory is a framework for the expansion of human capital within an organization through the development of both the organization and the individual to achieve performance improvement (Kelly, 2006; Werner &DeSimone, 2011). HRD is the integrated use of training, organization, and career development efforts to improve individual, group and organizational effectiveness (Kelly, 2006). HRD develops the key competencies that enable individuals in organizations to perform current and future jobs through planned learning activities (Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Kirkpatrick&Kirkpatrick, 2006). From managerial perspective, HRD refers to improving employees' skills, knowledge, and ability as a means of improving a firm's efficiency or productivity (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013; Kelly, 2006). As the demands on organizations develop, it is critical that organizations implement training and development activities to ensure that their staff has the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics to adapt to these new challenges (Pynes, 2009: 310).

HRD/training programs are necessary but not sufficient conditions for an effective HRM. This suggests that HR utilization is an important aspect of HRM. Thus, no discussion of HRD would be complete without considering the role of HR utilization (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997; Tessema, Soeters & Abraham, 2005). HR utilization is the extent to which available human resources are deployed effectively for the maximum achievement of individual, collective, organizational or national goals and objectives. Effective HR utilization may involve human resource allocation, maintenance, and further development (Kiggundu, 1989: 151). Employees wish to maximize the satisfaction of needs, use their abilities to the fullest, and avoid frustration at work (Hilderbrand & Grindle, 1997).

If we conceive of performance as a function of ability in interaction with motivation, we may assume that people employed in public organisations are likely to have a required minimal degree of ability. This ability can be enhanced through HRD for improvement of knowledge, skills and competence. Hence, human resources need, like all other resources in organizations, constant replenishment, both qualitatively and quantitatively (Berman et al., 2012: 234; Thomas & Theresa, 1995: 7). Effective HRD programs play an important role in equipping the workforce with

the necessary skills, knowledge and characteristics that they need to successfully accomplish their duties and responsibilities (Kirkpatrick&Kirkpatrick, 2005; Werner &DeSimone, 2011). This leads us to question: *how does HRD and utilization affect performance?*

Management scholars and practitioners alike have become increasingly interested in learning more about HR practices to enhance employee and organization performance (e.g., Baxall, 2003; Delaney & Huselid, 1996). Basically, there are three dominant theoretical perspectives in the HRM-organization performance literature: universalistic (e.g., Delery& Doty, 1996), contingency (e.g., Youndt et al., 1996), and configurational (e.g., MacDuffie, 1995). A universalistic approach assumes organizations that adopt HR best practices will reap higher performance anytime and anywhere. A contingency approach assumes that organizations that adopt HR practices that best fit their strategy (vertical fit) will achieve higher performance. A configuration approach assumes in order to reach a level of high performance; organizations should adopt HR practices that best fit their strategy (vertical fit) and are consistent among them (horizontal fit).

The three perspectives outlined all have a basic theoretical grounding in contingency, system theory or organizational behaviour theory (Guest, 1997: 266), human capital theory, and resource-based theory (Youndt et al., 1996: 837). There is empirical support for each of the three main perspectives of HRM and performance, but consistently stronger support for the universalistic perspective with its view that those organizations that use more high performance HR practices (sets of practices high-performance work system) report higher performance (e.g., Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Guest, 1997). The general perspective represented by this stream of research is sufficiently encouraging to suggest that it continues to improve (Guest, 1997: 273). The above theoretical arguments provide necessary insight into how HR policies and practices translate into higher performance. Thus, the logic connecting the HR practices and performance is intuitively appealing and supported by theoretical arguments from a number of disciplines.

Most of the HRM/HRD theories and conceptual frameworks are based on HRM in the private sector and approached from a Western perspective. However, the context within which employees are managed (staffed, developed, and utilized) in the public sector is different from that of the private sector organization. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework through which to assess the effectiveness of HRD and utilization in public service organizations. To this end, we developed the conceptual framework presented in Figure-1. The conceptual framework was based on the following assumptions:

- *External factors* (A1) affect HRM sub-systems (B1), which in turn affect *HR outcomes* (C1), which subsequently affect *employee performance* (D). The conceptual framework reveals that HR outcomes serve as mediating variables between HR sub-systems (practices) and performance**.**

- External or environmental factors (economic, political, legal, & socio-cultural) affect the both HRD and utilization practices, which in turn affect HR outcomes (e.g., HR competence, motivation, and retention), which subsequently affect employee and organizational performance.

- The HRM system has several functions. For convenience purposes, the HR functions are grouped under three categories or sub-systems, namely HR procurement/staffing, training/development and, utilization. The logic is that organizations, first procure/staff human resources, then train/develop and utilize them to achieve their objectives. The overall HRM effectiveness depends to a great extent upon the effectiveness of the above three sub-systems of HR. This study, however, focuses on HRD and utilization.

- As employee performance is influenced by several factors, it is difficult to certainly know the net impact of HRD and utilization practices upon performance. However, HR outcomes (employee competence - ability to work -, motivation - willingness to work -, and retention - willingness to stay) are used as mediating variables between HR practices and employee performance. For example, there are unequivocal relationship between investment on training and employee competence (e.g., Kalleberg & Moody, 1994; Tessema et al., 2005), and between compensation and retention (Mathis et al., 20014; Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Wright et al., 2003). HR outcomes serve as mediating variable between HRD and utilization practices and performance. HR practices give rise to HR outcomes, which influence the performance of the organization (Paauwe, 2004).

- The three HRM-sub systems (HR staffing, HRD, and utilization) are affected by some factors, which we coined 'critical factors'. While the first nine factors are assumed to be "critical or determinant factors for HRD/training", the next three factors are also assumed as "critical or determinant factors for HR utilization" in the public service organizations. The main assumption here is that the more those critical factors are in place, the more impact the HRD and utilization will have.

- The effectiveness of HRD and utilization in public service organizations is influenced at three levels: macro (environmental factors), organizational (organizational factors) and individual (employee characteristics).
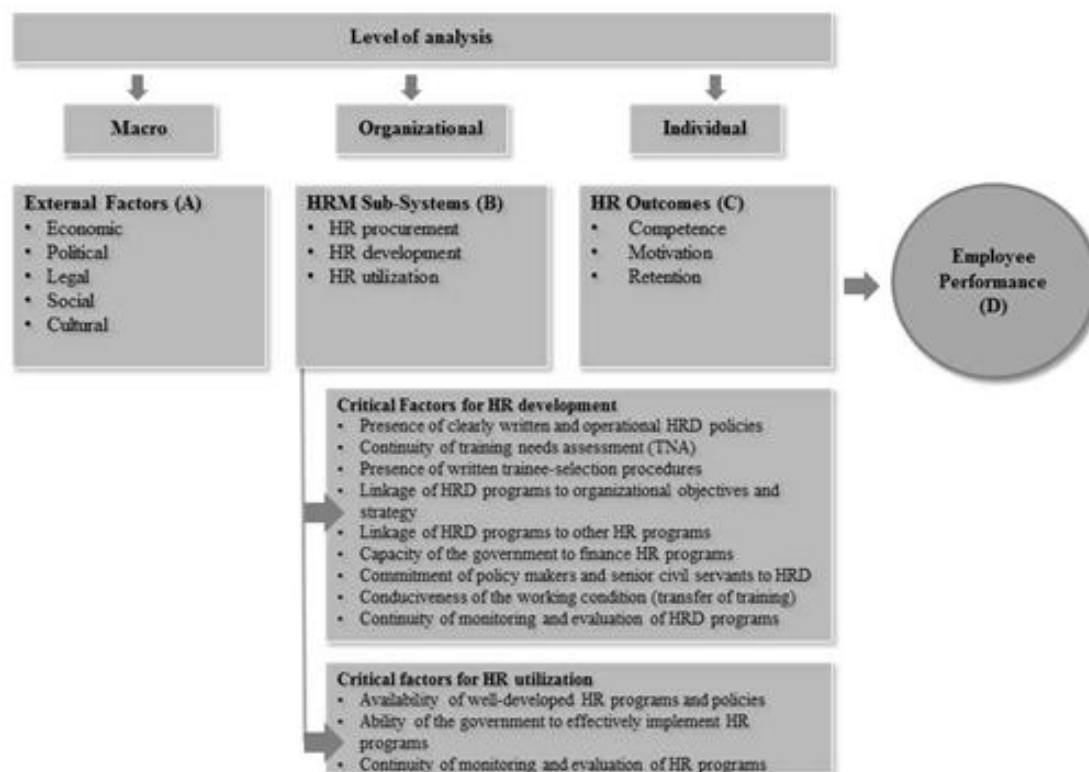

Fig1. *A framework for assessing the effectiveness of HRD and utilization practices*

After an extensive literature review, the following critical factors affecting HRD/training were identified.

Presence of clearly written and operational HRD/training policies: According to Paul (1983), *training policy* is a policy that outlines the scope of all training activities, approaches to training needs, assessment of the priority and financing arrangements, the roles and functions of different categories of training institutions and mechanisms for co-ordinating their work, linkage of training to career planning and development and guidelines for the monitoring and evaluation of training. One of the pre-conditions for success of public service training is, therefore, the presence of effective and operational training policies (Kerrigan & Luke, 1987; Tessema et al., 2012; Paul, 1983). Kiggundu (1989) and Paul (1983) underscore that when training programs are developed in isolation from comprehensive development planning or from general administrative policies and practices, many of the factors that are crucial to successful training may be overlooked.

Continuity of 'Training Needs Assessment' (TNA): If HRD is to be responsive to the real needs of organizations through improving the relevance of the training programs, conducting proper and continuous training needs assessment is a vital issue. Training needs assessment is the first step in the training cycle. It is critical as it provides the information on which training is based and the latter can be no better than the quality of the analysis permits. The identification of training needs should start with an assessment of the organization or national goals, objectives and priorities (e.g., Kirkpatrick&Kirkpatrick, 2006; Thomas & Theresa, 1995).Following national planning and goal setting, and after organizational and individual training needs assessments, the appropriate training programs can be chosen to support national programs, organizational improvement, and individual development.

Presence of written and acceptable trainee-selection procedures: If HRD is to have an impact, organizations should select trainees who are suitably qualified and motivated/willing to undertake a particular training program (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013; Guerrero & Sire, 2001). There must be some criteria for the same or similar basis of which candidates should be selected such as age, educational level, position level, type of career and responsibilities, past experiences, performance records, etc. so that the entire group will consist of suitably qualified candidates to participate in the same training program (Tessema et al., 2005).

Linkage of HRD programs to organizational objectives and strategy: Another key ingredient in effective HRD is a proper linkage of HRD programs to organizational objectives and strategy (e.g., Kerrigan & Luke, 1987; ILO, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). HRD then becomes relevant to the achievement of organizational objectives. The quality of HRD programs in the public sector can be improved only if HRD efforts are integrated with manpower planning of the public sector, which, in turn, has to be integrated with the changing development objectives and strategies of a country.

Linkages of HRD programs to other HR programs and policies: Linkage of HRD to other HR programs (placement, promotions, salary, other incentives, etc.) also plays a decisive role in the effectiveness of HRD (e.g., Berman et al., 2012; ILO, 1998; Tessema et al., 2012). This is because the above linkages greatly affect the motivation of trainees, which subsequently influences the impact of the HRD programs. The ILO (1998: 9) also underscores that before any investment in HRD can be made, there must be an assumption that career structures have been designed on the basis of reliable, objective and established criteria.

Capacity of a government to finance HRD programs: The adequacy and reliability of financial resources is one of the key factors for success of HRD (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013; Pfeffer, 1994). An important factor influencing HRD is its financing and funding. There are varying practices and the proportion of funds allocated by government for training purposes differs widely.

Commitment of policy makers and senior public servants to HRD: There is no doubt that, like all national development programs and projects, the success of HRD initiatives is contingent on the active support of both policy makers and senior public servants (e.g., ILO, 1998; Kiggundu, 1989; Stephen, 2004, Tessema et al., 2012). A commitment on the part of both political and bureaucratic leadership is an important requirement of successful implementation of HRD programs. Policy makers and senior public servants should themselves be convinced of the utility of HRD.

Conduciveness of the working condition (transfer of training to work place): If HRD is to have an impact, there should be a conducive working condition where trainees are able to apply what they have learned (e.g., Berman et al., 2012; Grindle, 1997; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Senior managers have to encourage trainees to practise what they have learned by creating a favourable work environment. If senior managers do not provide opportunities for the trainees to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills, the benefits from an effective HRD program will be quickly lost. Sharma (1994: 125) argued that one of the important shortcomings in many training programs is a lack of incorporation of the training results in actual work operation. This is an important deficiency that should not be overlooked

Continuity of monitoring and evaluation of HRD programs: It is believed that if there is no effort to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of an HRD program, the function may in reality mean wastage of time and money. HRD may, then, do greater harm to an organization. The supposed panacea may turn out to be a scapegoat. It is, therefore, essential to see that an HRD ensures its continuity by providing the returns that are greater than the costs incurred in its operation (Kirkpatrick&Kirkpatrick, 2006). Unless responsibility is allocated to monitoring and it is clear what is to be monitored, problems may go undetected and the effectiveness of the activities and programs will be diminished. Hence, an HRD plans at all levels (individual, institutional, and national) should include at the outset information about how monitoring and evaluation will take place (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Blanchard & Thacker, 2013).

3. CRITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HR UTILIZATION

From an extensive literature survey, the following three critical factors for HR utilization were identified:

Availability of well-developed HR programs and policies: A government must formulate HR programs and policies to ensure that they are correctly interpreted and consistently applied throughout the public service so that all employees are treated fairly and equitably. This suggests that a number of benefits could be obtained from the availability of well-developed HR programs and policies (e.g., Berman et al., 2012; Naff et al. 2014). Programs that affect HR utilization include pay, employee benefits, placement, employee performance evaluation, promotion and transfer, and disciplinary program.

Ability of a public service to effectively implement HR programs: The ability of public service organizations to properly implement HR programs is a critical factor for effectively utilizing the organizational workforce (e.g., Grindle, 1997; Siegel, 1998). This reveals that developing attractive HR programs is necessary but not sufficient in effectively utilizing public servants. Thus, the issue of ability to put the program into action comes into being. Berman et al. (2012) also underline that top officials must publicly commit to the HR programs by devoting sufficient resources to them. "If HRM is to provide adequate contribution, above all, requires a supportive atmosphere" (Romzek, 1990, p. 237).

Continuity of monitoring and evaluation of HR programs: It is also important to bear in mind, however, that developing and implementing attractive HR programs alone may be necessary, but not sufficient. This is because unless HR programs and policies are monitored and evaluated, they may not always be able to attract, motivate and retain qualified and experienced staff as the perceptions and demands of employees change with fast changing world (Hays et al. 2009; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; OECD, 1996). Effective HRM, therefore, demands that HRM systems be monitored and evaluated comprehensively to assess whether the elements are all pointing in the same direction and to see whether the organization is implementing HR programs and policies as they should be.

4. EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING HRD AND UTILIZATION

Basically, there are a number of external environmental factors (political, economic, legal, social, and cultural) affecting the effectiveness of HRD and utilization in the public sector. Knowing the environmental context plays an important role in realizing how HRD and utilization decisions are made and implemented in public organizations. Public organizations are increasingly being influenced by external factors that impact the internal operations of the organization, particularly, HRD. As Perry and Mesch (1997: 220) observed, powerful economic, demographic, and technological forces have arisen that are radically reshaping longstanding assumptions about organizations and management. Due to the above reasons, Berman et al. (2012) further remarked that managing people in government requires knowledge of the above-mentioned external factors within which HR policies and activities take place.

Economic factors: Having effective HRD and utilization depends, to a considerable degree, upon the ability of a government to commit resources. The emerging economic context, within which HRM/HRD is taking place, therefore, greatly affects HR programs and policies. Occasionally, governments find themselves in the position of being unable to compete for personnel. As a result, the ability to pay becomes an unarticulated policy limitation on compensation (Siegel, 1998: 611). Berman et al. (2012) also note that declining budgets - a combination of tax limitation measures, budget cuts, and pressures to curb future expenditures - has occurred at all levels of government. In times of drastic fiscal stress or when organizations are experiencing severe fiscal crisis, we expect unusual way of managing HR measures such as lay off, wage freezes and cuts, reduction in HRD investment. HRD and utilization in the public sector is complicated by a declining budget combined with heightened citizen complaints and pressures for higher productivity (Naff et al. 2014).

Political factors: Although the private and public organization use many HR functions, the way they do these things is likely to differ substantially. Why should we expect public management to be practiced in the same way as business management if public services provide a different context for management (Naff et al. 2014)? Colling (1997) also suggested that "despite the widespread change, the policy and political features, which have critically influenced the state sector in the past remain, even if they are now differently articulated" (p.654). Hence, one can argue that due to the political factors, HRD and utilization in a public service are different from that of the private sector.

Social factors: Organizations are encountering additional challenges to the ways they used to play their organizational roles. These challenges arise from changes in the demographic characteristic of the workforce (Halachmi & Krogt, 1998; Noe et al. 2015). And therefore, any analysis of social context of work must start by considering demographic trends such as an increase in the years of formal education, the greater diversity in terms of ethnic origin, gender, and domestic status, more one-parent families, higher divorce rates, and the falling birth rate (Mathis & Jackson, 2014; Noe et al. 2015). Added to these changes in the composition of the labour force are changes in the attitudes and expectation that employees have about work. All these social factors to varying degrees impinge on the HRD and utilization practices (Naff et al. 2014; Paauwe, 2004; Romzek, 1990). It is these powerful social forces, external to organizations and beyond the control of those who manage them, which provide the social context of HRD and utilization (Pynes, 2009). The changing social context of HR places more pressure on organizations to provide better terms and employment prospects for their employees, on one hand, and to have more regard to their social responsibilities to both employees and the wide community on the other. According to Halachmi and Krogt (1998), such workforce changes have been augmented by related changes in employees' expectations about three important issues: [1] having working conditions that are more family friendly: for example, access to benefits such as maternity leave, child care, and parent care; [2] having a say about decisions that affect the way employees carry out their work and about the roles of employers and immediate supervisors who may act as mentors and coaches; and [3] especially for professionals, having authority, responsibilities, and autonomy in their work.

Cultural factors: The organization's culture refers to norms of conduct, work attitudes, and the values and assumptions about relationships that govern behaviour at the organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2014). According to Pynes (2009), organizational culture is defined as "the values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, and norms shared by a majority of the organization's members" (p. 106). As argued by Pfeffer (1994, p. 250), "old habits and old ways of thinking die hard, particularly when they are consistent with important social values and ideology as well as with implicit theories of behaviour". Put it somewhat differently, a culture is not something an organization has; a culture is something an organization is (Noe et al. 2015). A culture is, therefore, integral to an organization and cannot be manipulated easily. It provides clues and guides that help employees understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The ILO (1998) noted that "the bureaucratic nature of each bureaucratic culture differs as a result of the historical development of each country's public administration" (p. 54). *What does this all mean for HRD and utilization*? Because managing people is the essence of management, the techniques and practices adopted for managing an organization should not conflict with the general values, attitudes and behaviour patterns of staff (Hofstede, 1980). At the very least, this requires careful examination of the value assumptions embodied in a given HR practice before it is considered for adoption in an organizational setting and adopted to the local circumstance, if necessary.

Legal factors: Governments have been issuing laws and regulations affecting the way employees have to be managed (Naff et al. 2014). Those laws and regulations have a direct impact on HRD and utilization practices. According to Pynes (2009), government laws and regulations are designed to protect employees from mistreatment and discrimination in the workplace for non-job related or non-performance related reasons.

5. METHOD

Taking into account the objective of the paper as well as the context within which HRD and utilization practices take place in the public sector, we developed a conceptual framework (Figure 1). A conceptual framework covers the main features (aspects, dimensions, factors, & variables) of a study and their presumed relationship (Robson, 1995). Robson (1995) argued that developing a conceptual framework enables a researcher to be explicit about what s/he thinks is doing. Argyrous (2000) suggested that "the choice of variables to investigate is affected by a number of complex factors: theoretical framework, pre-specified research agenda and curiosity-driven research. Nevertheless, the three motivations are obviously not mutually exclusive" (p. 5). Hiltrop (1996) also remarked the variables chosen should depend on the problems being researched and the kinds of predictability sought. He further noted that variables in a checklist can be interrelated and their exact number and their labels are somewhat arbitrary. Thus, as with any checklist, our

checklist may be incomplete and, in some cases, has overlapping factors. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework can be used to bring about a more accurate diagnosis and understanding of the factors that affect HRD and utilization practices as well as for improving our understanding of the HRD and utilization related challenges facing public organizations. As remarked by Robson (1995), a framework is a means of indicating the direction of the action needed, it is not an end in itself.

6. DISCUSSION

The main goal of this paper is to develop a framework through which to analyze HRD and utilization practices in the public sector. This study argued that human capital provides a competitive advantage. Employees' competence (ability to do), motivation (willingness to work) and retention (willingness to stay) are crucial if organizations are to get the maximum contribution from their employees. Other things being equal, competent employees are more effective and productive than incompetent employees; employees who are motivated are more effective and productive than apathetic employees; and employees who do not have an intention to leave are more productive than those who have an intention to leave the organization. Thus, the more the HR outcomes (employee competence, motivation, and retention) are in place, the better the HR contribution would be (e.g., Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2009; Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004; Wright et al., 2003; Guest, 1997). By implication, if one of the three important HR outcomes is missing, there is a negative impact upon individual and/or organizational performance (Berdi et al., 2008; Guest, 1997; Paauwe, 2004).

HR outcomes (employees' competence, motivation, and retention), that which heavily impact HRD and utilization, are greatly influenced by external factors (economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural). Therefore, for better understanding of HRD and utilization in public service organizations, we need to take into account the wider contexts within which HRD and utilization operate. Thus, this study argues the context within which employees are managed in the public sector is different from that of the private sector organization.

Public organizations, unlike their private sector counterparts, will always have competing objectives and demands made upon them by people who are not solely consumers of services, but also citizens and taxpayers (Hays et al. 2009). While HR systems in the private sector have a central goal (to produce goods and services at a profit), public HRM must respond to the diverse demands of a pluralistic society (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1998; Pynes, 2009). Many of these demands stem from the belief that government jobs stem from government resources that should be parcelled out much like any other public benefit. This perception is apparent in public programs that use government jobs to reward faithful service or to solve social problems. A few common examples of these types or program are preferential treatment for veterans, the continued existence of patronage appointments, the distribution of jobs according to regional or state quotas, and the granting of jobs to the hard-core unemployed (a form of welfare) (Berman et al., 2012; Naff et al., 2014). Managing a public organization is a more difficult task than managing a private sector (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). The management of public organizations and their workforces were subject to various forms of political control and scrutiny (Colling, 1997). Thus, in the words of Ranson and Stewart (1995), "political process can be seen as an inherent feature of management in the public domain" (p. 57). This implies that public HRM would not be complete without taking into consideration the influence of political factors.

Despite the prominent doctrines of HRM and the merit system in a public sector, a comparison between merit principles and the actual practice of public HRM in many countries had been a disillusioning experience. For example, many of the selection, training, retention, and advancement criteria currently governing public servants accommodate social and political values that transcend job competence. Hence, it could be argued that HRM in the public sector should be seen not only as a process and collection of techniques, but also as an interaction of some dominant values (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1998). Among the most important values are merit and equity. These values are said to generate mutually conflicting expectations about the goals and methods of managing people. According to Klingner and Nalbandian (1998), HRM in the public service can be viewed as from at least four perspectives;[a] It is the *functions* (planning, recruitment, selection, training, compensation, performance appraisal, separation, etc.) needed to manage human resources in public organization; [b] it is the *process* by which public jobs, as

scarce resources, are allocated; [c] it is the interaction among fundamental *societal values* (merit/efficiency and equity/politics) that often conflict, and [d] it is the *embodiment of HR systems*- the laws, rules, organizations, and procedures used to fulfil HR functions in ways that express the abstract values. Therefore, the competing values in public administration also play themselves out in the HR arena. It must be noted that, merit principles replaced patronage as the most common, although by no means the sole, criteria for HR related decisions (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1998).

Prior research indicate that in spite of the importance of allocating resources for an adequate budget for HRD purposes, many countries, in recent years, have decreased their investment in HRD (e.g., Berman et al., 2012; ILO, 1998; Pfeffer, 1994). In the words of Berman et al. (2012), "training is often the forgotten budget item" (p. 233). Under short-term budget pressure, HRD is often the first thing to be cut. However, Berman et al. (2012) argued that personnel has to be treated as an asset and investment, rather than as a cost to be minimized. Some studies also reveal that enough attention is not being given to the need for follow-up (monitoring and evaluation) after HRD/training. In connection to HRD, an important question is not how many employees are trained, but how they are trained/developed, utilized, and retained that matters (Tessema et al., 2005). The above issue is multifaceted involving economic, political and managerial factors.

Our conceptual framework lays considerable stress on the checklist of critical factors for HRD and utilization in a public service. It may be assumed that the critical factors for HRD and utilization are 'best practices' and are universally applicable. However, this is not a position we would like to suggest for we are well aware of the differences existing among countries. Nevertheless, they are a quasi-checklist through which to assess the effectiveness of HRD and utilization practices in the public sector. Environmental factors grounded in the economic and political environments were found to be instrumental in either facilitating or hindering the presence of effective HRD and utilization practices. Wide variations existed as to how countries manage HRD and utilization practices. That is, variations in contextual factors act as constraints on or enhancement in the management of HR. Nevertheless, the presence (or absence) of the critical factors identified in the framework greatly affect the effectiveness of HRD and utilization, which subsequently influence the performance of a public service.

7. DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper concludes that HRD programs may be able to produce competent individuals, but it may be difficult to produce committed and motivated individuals. The above argument also leads scholars to suggest that employee performance is a function of both competence and motivation (Mathis & Jackson, 2014). While competence could be improved through HRD; motivation of the ex-trainees could be improved through linking HRD programs with other HR-programs such as incremental salary increases, job placement, promotion within the organization, proper supervision, and creating conducive working conditions that facilitate the transfer of learning (e.g. Berman et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Stephen, 2004).

Generally, employees tend to develop high expectations when they get additional training. However, if their expectations are not met, frustration is likely to arise (Tessema et al. 2012). This study contends that instead of HRD having a positive impact on the morale and performance of the trained workforce, it could instead have a negative impact if not supplemented with other motivational factors such as attractive HR programs, which are, in turn, influenced by both internal and external factors. In the words of Grindle (1997), "training and skill building investments tend to be more easily accomplished than utilizing professional and technical personnel appropriately" (p. 13).

This paper argues that although effective HRD and utilization programs cannot guarantee organizational success, their absence dramatically increase the likelihood of failure. This suggests that even though HRD and utilization programs have a particularly important role to play in improving the contribution of human resources, it should not be perceived as a panacea for all organizational and national problems. This means that HRD and utilization programs are not the only solution for improving individual and organization performance. They are among those, which an organization needs to achieve its objectives. Hence, it can be an answer to organizational improvement.

The present study extends previous research in HRD and utilization in the public sector. It is an important step forward in understanding the factors that influence the effectiveness of HRD and utilization practices, which subsequently affect both individual and organizational performance. Since the main focus of this study is to develop a conceptual framework, future research should be directed at applying the framework in assessing the effectiveness of HRD and utilization in the public sector organizations.

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