

# Talent Engagement Drivers And Employee Productivity In Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions In Kenya.

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**Abstract-** Training and human resource development is an important component in any given learning organization. Kenya, as a developing economy has put in place parameters to spearhead its growth namely; Vision 2030 which recognize the critical role of science, technology, innovation and training in moving the country to a middle income status. The productivity of workers in Technical colleges is very critical in ensuring workers and the general performance of Technical Colleges to meet the set objectives that are normally spelled out in their five year strategic plans as well as annual objectives. Extensive literature review shows little has been documented on talent engagement drivers and employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya. Therefore, this study sought to investigate influence of talent engagement drivers on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya. A population is a complete set of units to be studied (Kothari, 2004). The study was anchored on resource based view and Human Capital theories. A positivistic philosophy was adopted in order to investigate relationships among the variables. Descriptive and correlation research designs, which led to mixed research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study included all of TVET institutions in Kenya. There is a total 629 TVET institutions (GoK, 2013). Therefore the target population was all the 629 TVET institutions in Kenya. Using Fisher formula, 238 institutions were selected to participate in the study as the sample size. The Research design the study used is the descriptive survey design. Data was analyzed using inferential statistics. This involved the use of correlation and regression modelling. From the results, the correlation between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity was 0.893 at  $p=0.000$ . This implied that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity. From the results, the F-statistics was recorded as 896.581 at  $p=0.000$ , at 95% confidence level, implied the model was fit to explain the relationship between talent engagement and employee productivity. The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity in TVETs in Kenya.

**Index Terms-** Talent Engagement Drivers, Employee Productivity, Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions, Kenya

## I. INTRODUCTION

As noted by Patro (2013), over the past decade, globally, many authors have written on the topic 'Employee Engagement'. Kahn (1990) was the first to coin the term engagement as he described how people can "use varying degrees of their selves – physically, cognitively and emotionally in work role performances". Employee engagement is not the only term used to describe the positive attitudes and behavior of employees at work. Other terms commonly used are 'commitment', 'organization citizenship behavior' and the 'psychological contract'. The policy and practice implications of employee engagement are often captured in 'high involvement work practices' and 'high performance working'. Employee Engagement is arguably the most critical metric for organizations in the 21st Century. Employee engagement is directly influenced by growth of the organization, value addition experienced by employees and employee perception of the organization.

Human resource practitioners believe that the engagement challenge has a lot to do with how employee feels about the about work experience and how he or she is treated in the organization (Patro, 2013). It has a lot to do with emotions which are fundamentally related to drive bottom line success in a company. Employee engagement initiative has a direct impact on the organization's productivity. The concept of engagement has naturally evolved from past research on high involvement, empowerment, job motivation, organizational commitment, and trust. The key factors in engagement are such as alignment of employees toward strategy; enabling employees to have the capability to engage them-selves; and creating the sense of engagement. This multi-faceted nature of employee engagement is well captured by the Employee Engagement Consortium at Kingston University. The researchers say that: 'fundamental to the concept of employee engagement is the idea that all employees can make a contribution to the successful functioning and continuous improvement of organizational processes. Engagement is about creating opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and the wider organization. It is about creating an environment where employees

are motivated to want to connect with their work and really care about doing a good job' (Patro, 2013).

At this critical time, the increased attention from the government to employee engagement is highly required and will lead to achieving the government's goals, as well as, increase its productivity. Gallup's study, which was demonstrated on 142 countries in 2015; showed that 13% of Egypt's employees are engaged and mentally committed to their jobs and likely to be making positive contributions to their organizations. However, 55% of Egypt's employees are not engaged and 32% are unhappy and unproductive. This is an indication for a big problem (Gallop Study, 2015) (Hanan, *et al.*, 2014). Managers should promote engagement for numerous reasons, such as the employees' mental health; it was found that engaged employees have healthier mental state and tend to be more productive than employees who are not engaged, which affects the organization's competitive advantage (May, *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, a clear strong relationship between productivity and organizational performance was found; the higher the employee engagement, the better the financial performance, the less the turnover rate, and the higher the productivity (Baumruk, 2006).

### Talent Engagement Drivers

Talent engagement drivers can efficiently and effectively lead to employee engagement. Those drivers are represented in; the job's nature, an individual's relationships with coworkers as well as personal relationship with one's manager, employee development opportunities, the organization's culture, the communication's quality, the management's styles, and the levels of trust and respect within the organization (Lockwood, 2007). The levels of engagement and its drivers are not constant; however, they differ from one organization to the other; due to numerous factors, such as: the different organizations' structures, cultures and policies, the different employee groups, and the different individuals and jobs (Robinson, 2007). The most important drivers for engagement can be considered the involvement, career progression, training and development, communication, one's belief in company's path, and participation in company decisions (Robinson *et al.*, 2007).

### Employee Productivity

According to Ali and Adan (2013), productivity is described as the production of goods and services with the least effort. These authors further clarified productivity as being the ratio that measures how well an organization (or individual, industry, country) converts input resources (e.g. labour, materials, machines) into goods and services. Atkinson (2013) defined productivity as being "an economic output per unit of input". Feige, Wallbaum, Janser and Windlinger (2013) stated that productivity was "the ratio of output to input depending on the context and content of the output measure (e.g. products, services, market shares, value) and input measure (for example cash, labour, energy, materials, and work environment)." For Yi and Chan (2013), productivity is the efficiency and the rate at which goods are produced. They further described it as "being used to denote a relationship between output and the associated inputs used in the production process", and said it is a measure of outputs obtained by a combination of inputs. In general, productivity is about efficiency in relation to the rate of output, per unit of input (Meyer,

Fritz, Murphy and Zimmermann, 2014). In practical terms, productivity refers to the employee's continuous efforts to convert inputs into outputs efficiently and sustainably – in pursuit of meeting the organizational goals.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kenya's economic growth is hinged on adoption of knowledge based economy. Consequently, the critical role that research, technology and innovation are expected to play in moving the country to a middle income status as well as the role of a well-trained public service in enhancing efficiency and effective service delivery have been aptly captured in the country's economic blue print; Vision 2030 (RoK, 2007). However, the performance of the public service in general and of state corporations in particular has been a matter of great concern to the government and the general public (RoK, 2013).

Employees are the key assets to any organization and if they are not given the right space and time to make a perfect blend of work and fun at workplace, then the sense of dis-engagement sets in the employees. Organization and employees are both dependent on each other to fulfil their goals and objectives. Therefore, employee engagement should not be a one-time exercise but it should be integrated in the culture of the company. Employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement and action. Thus, organizations today should actively look forward to fulfil employee's expectations and thus, create an impact on the performance of employee, which directly affects the organization's performance.

Several studies on engagement drivers and employee productivity have been carried out. A study on drivers of engagement by Mani (2011) predicted four drivers, namely employee welfare, empowerment, employee growth and interpersonal relationships (Mani, 2011), Seijit (2006) identified the 10 Cs of Employee Engagement, namely Connect, Career, Clarity, Convey, Congratulate, Contribute, Control, Collaborate, Credibility & Confidence. The three elements of employee engagement, viz contributions, connections, growth and advancement, were identified through a study by Wallace *et al.*, (2006), as cited in Mani, 2011. Britt *et al* (2001) predicted employee involvement and commitment as engagement drivers. Study by IES in 2004 identified the following as predictors: leadership, relationships at work, total reward, recognition, work life balance and work itself. Study by IES (2005) identified the following drivers: job satisfaction, feeling valued and involved, equal opportunity, health and safety, length of service, communication and co-operation. A study by Towers Watson (2009) identified following three predictors of engagement; rational (how well the employee understands roles/responsibilities), emotional (how much passion employee can bring to work) and motivational (how willing is the employee to invest discretionary effort to perform their role). The said studies were done outside Kenya and used different constructs to define talent engagement drivers. The motivation of the current study was therefore to investigate effect of talent engagement drivers on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training institutions in Kenya.

### III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the study was to investigate effect of talent engagement drivers on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training institutions in Kenya.

### Research Hypothesis

**H01:** Talent engagement drivers has no effect on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training institutions in Kenya

#### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 show the conceptual framework that guided the present study.

#### Independent Variable

(Talent Engagement Drivers)

#### Dependent Variable

(Employee Productivity)

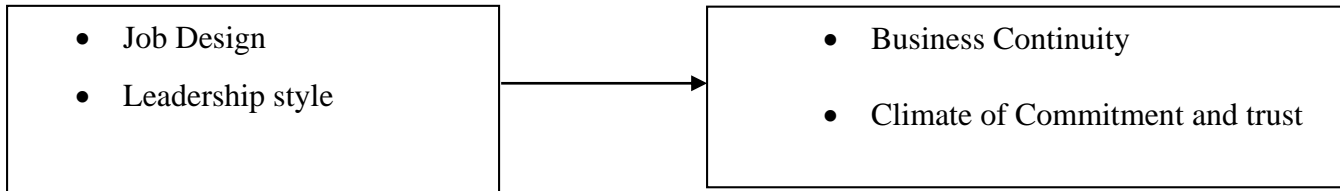


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework showing the interaction between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya.

*Source: Researcher's own Conceptualization, 2021.*

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Theoretical Foundations

Theoretical framework guides research to determine what things to measure, and what statistical relationships to look for (Defee, Randal, Thomasd & Williams, 2010). This study was guided by resource based view and human capital theory as discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### Resource Based View (RBV)

Resource Based View (RBV) was developed by Edith Penrose in 1959. She looked at an organization as a collection of physical and human resources bound together in an organizational structure. Physical assets which include systems are easily distinguishable due to their tangible existence while human resources (intellectual assets) which include employee skills and staff knowledge are considered as intangible assets. Resource based view indicates that a resource which must be currently scarce, difficult to imitate or copy, non-substitutable and not readily accessible in factor markets to create competitive advantage should provide economic value that determines organizational performance (McIvor, 2009).

Scholars subscribing to RBV argue that only strategically important and useful resources, core competencies and capabilities such as shared values and strategy should be viewed as sources of competitive advantage that leads to improved organizational performance. Core competencies provide an organization with a potential competitive edge and are distinctive, rare, valuable firm-level resources that competitors are unable to imitate, substitute or reproduce (Barney, 2007). RBV was deemed relevant to this study since it informed both the independent and moderating variables.

#### Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) of Schultz (1975) presumes that education or training had the potential for stimulating economic growth, technological progress and productivity

because it transferred useful knowledge and skills for better life time earnings (Ladipo et al., 2013). On the other hand, Klein and Cook (2006) acknowledged that investing in people was a form of human capital which propelled changes in the society. Like other forms of human capital, human hands-on ability could be increased through education and training experience.

Globalization has complicated the way of doing business and thus enforcing most organizations to invest in human resources as a source of competitive advantage. The world was experiencing a revolution in information technology, innovation, and telecommunications, which was driving the emergence of the knowledge-based economy (Chan, 2002). The accumulation of human capital improves labor productivity, facilitates technological innovations, increases returns on capital and makes growth more sustainable in any organization. This theory supported the independent, moderating and dependent variables as it contained the elements that form the variables.

### V. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Xu and Thomas Cooper (2010) leadership is a key precursor of engagement. Leadership research shows that certain leadership behaviors have clear association with engagement constructs such as motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, proactive behaviors and organizational citizenship behavior. Trust in leader, support from the leader, and creating a blame-free environment are considered as components of psychological safety, a condition proposed by Kahn, which leads to employee engagement (Xu and Thomas Cooper, 2010). Studies by Judge and Piccolo (2004), Lee (2005), Erkutlu (2008), Griffin *et al.*, (2010) provide evidence for association between positive leader behaviors and follower attitude and behaviors linked with engagement. A few other studies have attempted to provide direct evidence of association between leadership and employee engagement (Xu and Thomas Cooper, 2010).

A study by Atwater and Brett (2006, as cited in Xu and Thomas Cooper (2010) identifies three leadership behaviors, namely employee development, consideration and performance-orientation. The first two behaviors are labelled relationship-oriented and the third as task oriented. They further state that employee engagement includes facets of work on which leaders can take action. Metcalfe and Metcalfe (2008) present positive correlation between leadership scales and engagement constructs such as job and organizational commitment, motivation and job satisfaction. Papalexandris and Galanki (2009) identify two factors which are positively linked with engagement, namely, management and mentoring behaviors such as imparting confidence to followers, power sharing, communication, providing role clarification and articulation of vision which could be characterized as inspirational, visionary, decisive and team-oriented. More importantly, their study found only certain leader behaviors are associated with engagement, especially those enhance follower performance and which enable followers to relate with organizational goals. Studies by May *et al.*, (2004), Saks (2006), Bakker *et al.*, (2007) show that higher levels of engagement are observed for employees with their supervisors exhibiting more relationship-related behaviors ( as cited in Xu and Thomas Cooper (2010).

According to Khan (1990) for employee engagement take place, three prerequisites conditions ought to be met; the job has to be worthwhile, the work environment should be supportive and based on trust and the employee should have emotional and physical capacity to engage. These conditions are influenced by the organization's human resource management practices (HRMP) which are positively related to psychological empowerment that results to intrinsic motivation and increased work performance and organizational outcomes (He, 2014). Employee engagement is therefore a product of a healthy work culture and institutional support.

Another study by Grants (2008) on task significance found that it increases job dedication and cooperative behavior among employees by enabling employees to find meaning in their work leading to more involvement. This elicits discretionary effort from the employee and thus positively influences performance. However, job involvement does not affect performance directly but do so through its impact on other outcomes such as organizational commitment (Chughtai, 2008) and hence the need to test the effect of task significance on organizational performance while including a mediator such as organizational commitment.

## VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design alongside the correlation research design which lead to mixed research design. Mixed research design is preferred on the grounds that it is not only for collecting data, but also for investigating and attempting to establish the existence of certain relationships among dependent and independent variables which have already occurred. It is used for collecting information about peoples' perceptions and attitudes (Mugenda, 2008).

According to (Mertler, 2017), in this design, the researcher does not manipulate the variables under study but instead,

examines the variables in their existing condition. Mixed methods research is preferred in this study because; it helps explain, clarify and extend results of research; answers research questions that may require both types of data; one type of data and analysis may be used to offset the weaknesses of the other; and it is seen as more practical (Mertler, 2017).

## VII. STUDY POPULATION

A population is a complete set of units to be studied (Kothari, 2004). The population of the study included all of TVET institutions in Kenya. There is a total 629 TVET institutions (GoK, 2013). Therefore the target population was all the 629 TVET institutions in Kenya.

### Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample is a subset of a population (Kothari, 2004). Since the population was less than 10,000, the fisher et al, (2003) formula was employed. The Fisher formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1 - p)}{d^2}$$

Where;

$n$  = sample size

$z$  = the standard normal deviate value for the level of confidence, for instance 95% level of confidence =1.96.

$d$  = margin of error or level of precision at 0.05 for CI at 95%

$p$  = proportion to be estimated, Israel (2009) recommends that if one doesn't know the value of  $p$  then you should assume  $p=0.5$

Therefore, sample size was arrived at as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96^2)(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384$$

Since the population is less 10,000, the sample size is further adjusted as follows:

$$n_0 = n / (1 + ((n - 1) / N))$$

$$n_0 = 384 / (1 + ((384 - 1) / 629))$$

$$n_0 = 238$$

Therefore the sample size was 238 employees of TVET in Kenya who were selected using stratified random sampling.

### Research data and sampling Techniques

Primary data collection was done through administering of the questionnaire to the sample population in the study. Secondary data was obtained from published and unpublished sources including books, projects reports, magazines and other relevant materials in libraries and archives regarding to the application and development of knowledge sharing in different organizations and higher education. Internet search also formed an important part of secondary data.



VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was analyzed using inferential statistics. This involved the use of correlation and regression modelling

**Study Results and Findings**  
**Hypotheses Testing**

The following null hypothesis guided the study;

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between talent engagement drivers on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya.

The study used Karl Pearson correlation to establish the relationship between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity. The results were as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Correlation between Talent engagement drivers and Employee Productivity**

		1	2
Talent engagement Drivers (1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.893**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	140	140
Employee Productivity (2)	Pearson Correlation	.893**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	230	230

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the results in Table 4.1, the correlation between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity was 0.893 at p=0.000. This implied that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity.

**Table 4.2 ANOVA Test between Talent engagement Drivers and employee Productivity**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1629.266	1	1629.266	896.581	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	414.321	139	1.817		
	Total	2043.587	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Talent engagement Drivers

From the results in Table 2, the F-statistics was recorded as 896.581 at p=0.000, at 95% confidence level, implied the model was fit to explain the relationship between talent engagement and employee productivity.

The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between talent engagement drivers and employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya.

IX. CONCLUSION

There was a statistically significant effect of talent engagement drivers on employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya.

X. RECOMMENDATION

There is need for Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya to enhance job design and leadership style since they have an effect of employee productivity in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya.

XI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study was carried out in Technical Vocational Education Training Institutions in Kenya. Future studies are encouraged to be carried out in other learning and training institutions to compare the universities.

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