

Human Resource Management Challenges in Technical and Vocational Education in Developing Countries: The Case Study of Technical Institutions in Tanzania

Alex Augustino Nkondola

National Council for Technical Education, Tanzania
P.O. Box 7109, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Rita van Deuren

Maastricht School of Management
The Netherlands Endepolsdomein 150, 6229 EP Maastricht

Abstract

Human resource management is considered an essential element contributing to quality education. Therefore the prevailing concern of poor quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in developing countries like Tanzania raises doubt on human resource management capacity of TVET institutions. This research has revealed challenges affecting human resource management in TVET institutions such as lack of relevant human resource policies, inadequate human resource budget, incompetent human resource staff and poor organization of human resource departments. The paper recommends overcoming the challenges by increasing human resource budget, establishing human resource policies that suit TVET purpose, empowering human resource departments and ensure availability of competent human resource managers in TVET institutions.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Technical and Vocational Education, Tanzania.

1.0 Rationale

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an approach used to enhance organizational performance through people by employing people with competitively valuable knowledge and skills and retain the skilled, competent and motivated workforce the organization needs (Ghebreorgis & Karsten, 2007; Mohammed, Bhatti, Jariko, & Zehri, 2013; Rehman, 2012). This is achieved by implementing human resource management practices that enhance employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation (Liu, Combs, Ketchen Jr, & Ireland, 2007). In the context of education, it is argued that human resource management has positive contribution to the quality of education by implementing HRM practices that increase knowledge, skills and motivation of teachers (Amin, Ismail, Rasid, and Selemani, 2014; Rasheed, Aslam & Sarwar, 2010 and Tejumola, 2012). However, developing countries like Tanzania are still blamed for poor quality of TVET education (Kaaya, 2012), which implies limited capacity of human resource management to contribute to quality education. This research is an attempt to find out challenges constraining human resource management in TVET institutions in developing countries using the case study of technical institutions in Tanzania.

2.0 Human Resource Management

Literature shows that the survival of an organization depends upon how effectively it manages its human resources and implements human resource management practices (Kipkebut, 2010). It is argued that the contribution of human resource management to performance is likely to be greater where there is a strong HRM system which enhances an organizational climate that supports HR implementation (Armstrong, 2012b). This requires budget for HRM activities, competent HRM staff, effective HRM department and relevant HRM policies to ensure strong HRM systems.

2.1 HRM Budget

HRM budget is an important factor for enhancing implementation of HRM functions. It is argued that the collaboration between finance and human resource enables improvement of companies' business strategy.

Human resource can benefit from getting financial input for execution of HRM activities including structuring bonus schemes and strategies and aids human resource to achieve its objectives. Availability of sufficient budget enables the human resource department to take decision pertaining to staffing, developmental needs of the organization and staff compensation and reward. HRM budget is required to support implementation of HRM activities and run business in a successful manner. Strategic human resource management is effective only when it is accompanied by sufficient amount of capital (Choy, 2016).

Inadequate funding on the other side is reported among other things to affect investment on faculty training and hence jeopardizing the quality of education in Africa (Knobel, 2015). In the context of TVET in developing countries it is argued that one of the challenges facing TVET institutions is the issue of funding to attract and retain qualified teachers (Kavura, 2003). It is further argued that in developing countries TVET teacher education is still underfunded in relation to general schooling. Stable and sufficient funding is reported to be a prerequisite for achieving policy aims such as accessible, qualitative and relevant TVET teacher education provisions. Therefore provision of sufficient budget is essential for increasing the number of TVET teachers and the knowledge base on vocational pedagogy in order to be in-line with the actual needs of TVET teachers (Grijpstra, 2015).

2.2 HRM Policies

HRM policies serve as references for developing employment practices and making decisions about HRM practices. They have an effect on HRM practices and these in turn influence staff attitudes and behaviours which in turn again impact on service offering and customer perception of value (Armstrong, 2012b). It is considered that if a range of appropriate human resource policies are developed and implemented effectively, human resource will make a substantial impact on organizational performance (Armstrong, 2012a). Human resource policies of recruitment, training, promotion and rewards positively contribute to firm performance because recruitment, selection and training policies determine the quality of skills, knowledge and potential of employees and human resource policies of promotion and rewards affect the motivation aspect of employees. It is cemented that human resource policies and practices that enhance employee's skills, knowledge, capabilities and motivation add value to the organization performance (Liu et al., 2007). Thus TVET institutions require HRM policies that enhance effective implementation of HRM practices in order to attract, develop and retain qualified and motivated teachers for the TVET form of training.

2.3 HRM Organization

Human resource department is concerned with the acquisition, development and deployment of a superior workforce for the organization. It is argued that for many years, human resource scholars have claimed that it is imperative for human resource departments to play a more significant role in their organizations by being involved with strategic decision making or becoming strategic partners. Research in strategic human resource management has suggested that human resources being aligned with and involved in strategic decision making promotes better firm performance. However, it is argued that despite the existence of a large body of empirical work, many HRM departments are far from being involved with strategic issues and have limited contribution to their organizations (Brandl & Pohler, 2010). It is further cemented that the higher the HRM department plays a role of a strategic partner and change agent role in an organization the better the HRM department contributes to overall evaluation of the functions (Coda, Coelho César, Bido, & Louffat, 2009). Therefore for a TVET institution to perform better it requires having HRM department which plays a strategic HRM role as partner with full-fledged mandates on human resource management functions.

2.4 HRM Knowledge

HRM knowledge is essential for effective and efficient implementation of HRM activities. Coda (2014) supports by arguing that HRM professionals can exercise an influential role in organizational life by defining policies, practices, and tools that affect the levels of job satisfaction, motivation, commitment and relationships within the corporate environment and help the organization as well as individual employees reach their objectives. HRM competence is required to meet this goal. Therefore there is strong relationship between HRM technical competence and strategic contribution to organizational success. HRM professionals are required to master the accurate competencies to increase the overall firm's performance and productivity.

Human resource managers are concerned with ensuring that the business is appropriately staffed with the right people with the right skills to provide services. This involves recruiting and retaining the best people for the job. An effective implementation of human resource management functions requires knowledgeable managers capable of implementing human resource management functions in a valuable way (Torrington, Hall, Taylor, & Atkinson, 2011). On the other side incapability and misunderstanding of HRM practices on the part of line managers will prevent the organization from achieving the intended objectives (McGuire, Stoner, & Mylona, 2008).

Knowledge of HRM managers in the context of competence based training environment is important to enable them recruit and select TVET teachers with occupational experience (Backes and Burns, 2008; Clinebell and Clinebell, 20008; Wilkin and Nwoke, 2011); pedagogical skills (Runhaar and Runhaar, 2012); professional competence (Kohont & Nadoh Bergoc, 2010); and offer attractive rewards (Tafida, Clement, & Raihan, 2015). Therefore in the context of competence based education environment, HRM managers must have knowledge to attract, develop and retain qualified teachers for the delivery of competence based education and training.

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Main Objective

The main objective is to find out the challenges of human resource management in Tanzanian TVET.

3.2 Specific Objectives:

- (i) To find out the relevance of HRM policies for TVET institutions;
- (ii) To find out HRM budget capacity of TVET institutions;
- (iii) To find out the capacity of HRM department in TVET institutions; and
- (iv) To find out the capacity of HRM staff in TVET institutions.

4.0 Methodology

The main data collection method employed was interview and supplemented by documentary evidence. In this regard the research strategy employed is qualitative research in order to get in-depth information using small sample and extracting some information from existing documents. This strategy is supported by Blumberg et al. (2011, p. 295) who argue that “the cornerstone of qualitative data analysis is the coding of interview transcripts or any other documents”. Interviews were conducted through face to face method. The research was conducted in three colleges.

5.0 Findings

5.1 HRM Policy

Findings from the three colleges indicate that policies guiding human resource management belong to the government as they have no autonomy. In their opinions the policies are not relevant for technical institutions and recommended the need to have own HRM policies that will enable the institutions to attract and retain qualified teachers for the competence based training delivery.

The Principal of the first college said:

“With regard to my institution we have two levels of administration, the first level is the Ministerial level and the second level is the institutional level. Our institution is not autonomous, so to a greater extent we use policies and other operational guidelines that are given by our Parent Ministry. In this regard we don’t have a very unique or special sort of policies at institutional level. One of these policies is what we call Public Service Act no. 8 of 2002 and Public Service Standing Orders which are the main documents that guide us in human resource management. They are no policies that have been designed specific for our college level and they don’t portray the human resource management for our institution. The policies do not require teachers to have work experience of the industry or teaching methodology”.

The Principal of the second college said:

“... Human resource policies are all directed by the government. We follow employment, training and payment policies of the government and employment of our tutors is done through our Ministry. Those policies are government, the institute has no policy”.

The Principal of the third college said:

“In principle my institution has no its own human resource policies, we usually follow the government policies through the Ministry, in which we rely mainly on standing orders of the government to ensure that the human resource that we manage here abide with that standing orders...”

5.2 HRM Budget

Interview with Principals revealed that the budget is the major constraint for effective human resource management in TVET colleges. Responding to the question about human resource budget, the Principal of the first college said that:

“...Actually as far as Tanzania is concerned you can even predict the answers. We have got some budgetary constraints at all levels from the government, Ministerial level and up to the institutional level. This institution since is a non-autonomous institution and operates under the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children faces budgetary constraints. Actually the budget allocated for human resource issues every year for the last five years is real merger, very small to cover the needs prevailing in the current situation. So actually the budget is not enough, so we are discussing with the Ministry to remind them that they have to increase the budget. The budget is determined by the Ministry”.

The Principal of the second college said:

“The budget which is allocated for human resource management is not enough because there are some activities that are supposed to be done after working hours and according to the rules of the government if you work extra hours you are supposed to be paid. Because of the nature of our training tutors work beyond working hours so those hours that are beyond working hours they are supposed to be paid but the government has not enough money to cover that and because we are supposed to do that so that our students can learn and graduate tutors have to do without being paid. Thus they are paid less than the amount suggested in the available rules and guidelines. Also the budget is not enough to cover teacher training. So there is challenge on budget allocated for human resource that it is not enough...”

The third respondent said:

“The budget allocated to facilitate human resource management and administration is not enough, usually we don’t get enough money to address all human resource activities so some of human resource activities are not attended timely because of financial constraints”.

The interviewee was further asked what human resource activities are more affected by inadequate budget. The respondent explained that:

“Well, areas that are mostly affected are incentives for teachers which aim to ensure that they can work better, this is a very big problem. Also it affects training for our staff. We always plan to develop the capacity of our tutors but without money we fail to accomplish that and that is also another problem. So sometimes our tutors upgrade themselves and sometimes sponsored if the institution is able to find donors to sponsor”.

5.3 HRM Organization

Interview with Principals revealed lack of full-fledged human resource departments to deal with human resource management issues in the three colleges. Most of the functions are executed by their parent Ministries and therefore the colleges are not autonomous. The Principal of the first college reported that:

“We don’t have a human resource department at institutional level, but we have one human resource department at Ministerial level which also deals with human resource management at our institutional level. So we at the college level we don’t have a human resource department dealing with human resource management of the institution. Human resource management issues are dealt with by the Ministry”.

When asked about the need for having human resource department the Principal said:

“Absolutely one hundred percent there is a need, and it is a high time now to have a human resource management department at the institutional level. This is very important because we are increasing the number of students that we have, we are increasing number of staff at our institutional level, and human resource management issues are also increasing day after day, so there is a need to have human resource department and staff dealing with personnel issues at institutional level”.

The interview with the Principal of the second college also revealed lack of a properly functioning human resource management department:

“Actually we don’t have full mandate of human resource management because we implement those policies which are coming from the Ministry, so as the institute we don’t have our policies because we are implementing those which come from the Ministerial level. Currently we don’t have the human resource department but previously we had at-least one person who was managing human resources but now we don’t have a human resource officer. The Ministry didn’t employ for the institution personnel to deal with human resource issues at the institute. For the time being if the college has a human resource problem we have to consult the Ministry which has personnel officers in each department at Headquarter”.

The interview with the Principal of the third college also confirmed weak positioning of the human resource management department by saying that:

“... Well first of all the department of human resource management is there as per organization structure but in reality we don’t have professionals of human resource management, we only have a person who is there to ensure that things concerned human resources are attended and the human resource manager of the organization is stationed at the headquarter”.

5.4 HRM Knowledge

Interview with the Principals revealed that the three institutions have no professionals in human resource management since major human resource functions of the institutes are done by respective Ministries. The training institutions are mainly dealing with minor issues despite they are not experts in the field of human resource management. The Principal of the first college said that:

“... as I said we don’t have a human resource department, so very likely at the level of the college human resource issues to a greater or less extent are done by the Principal and Vice Principal dealing with administration but just very minor things of just initiating some human resource management issues to the Ministry. We forward any issue to the Ministry to make decisions”.

The interview with the Principal of the second college also revealed lack of administrative autonomy to manage human resource management activities. In addition, the Principal and Vice Principal who are managing minor day to day administrative issues are not specialists in human resource management rather specialists in the professional fields. So in responding to the question related to the knowledge of human resource management staff at the institute, the respondent said:

“We don’t have a human resource department and personnel of human resource field. Some minor human resource issues are handled by me and the Vice Principal. Actually we will be very much comfortable to have someone here to deal with human resource management because sometimes we face some problems related to human resource management and it takes a lot of time to contact the Ministry’s human resource department to handle human resource issues”.

Interview with the Principal of the third college also explained that the college is falling short of HRM specialists as responded that:

“In reality we don’t have professionals of human resource management, we only have a person who is there to ensure that things concerned human resources are attended and the human resource manager of the organization is stationed at the headquarter. Recruitment and selection of teachers, promotions and rewards are determined by the Ministry”.

5.5 Documentary Evidences

Findings also were validated by documents whereby it was observed that human resource management policies used in these researched institutions are the same to that applied by the central government through respective Ministries as revealed by documents used such as Public Service Act of 2002 and its Regulations of 2003, Public Service Standing Orders of 2009 which provide conditions for employment and Public Service Scheme of Services which provide entry requirement and salary scale for public servants.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings from the three colleges indicate that some TVET institutions are operating as non-autonomous institutions with the human resource management mandates centralized to the central government. In addition the colleges are facing challenges in respect of human resource management capacity in terms of having inadequate budget to support HRM activities related to attracting, developing and motivating qualified teachers. As observed Principals reported that it has affected among other things teachers' incentives. This challenge has also affected recruitment and selection of competent experts to join the TVET teaching profession due to low salary, training the available personnel to up-date their skills both professionally, pedagogically; and networking with the industry on teacher industrial training. Therefore budget constrains affects implementation of human resource functions in Tanzanian TVET colleges.

The findings also revealed lack of relevant HRM policies appropriate for execution of HRM functions in TVET institutions. The colleges follow HRM policies of the government and operationally governed by Parent Ministries. In addition the policies are not relevant for the institutions as they do not recognize recruitment and selection of teacher based on occupational work experience and pedagogical qualification and affects continuous professional development for teachers and their rewards and compensation.

In addition, it has been observed that these institutions lack competent and experienced HRM staff for managing human resource functions in TVET institutions. Interviews with Principals revealed that human resources functions are centralized to the central government through respective Ministries and minor human resources issues which are handled at college level are mainly done by Principals and Vice Principals who are not experts in human resource management as they lack appropriate knowledge and experience in human resource management. Thus the HRM department is not functioning properly as a strategic partner in enhancing the quality of TVET education.

The mentioned challenges infringe implementation of human resource management functions, thus this work recommends to stakeholders and policy makers to overcome the deficiencies by implementing the following HRM reforms in TVET colleges:

- (i) To decentralize human resource management functions to currently non-autonomous institutions in order to have their full-fledged human resource management departments that will be responsible for human resource management of their colleges. The decentralization will increase the capacity of TVET institutions to make and implement its own human resource management plans that will attract, utilize and retain qualified personnel for the college and general administrative responsibilities.
- (ii) The colleges must be given adequate HRM budget to support HRM functions. Having adequate budget will allow TVET colleges to be in a position to make decisions and properly and timely implement planned human resource management activities in totality.
- (iii) HRM Policies must be reviewed in order to support TVET institutions taking on board demands of TVET institutions and empower the HRM departments to play strategic role in human resource management as experts to ensure availability of competent and motivated staff in TVET institutions.

Therefore improving the quality of TVET education in Tanzania as indeed for all countries worldwide must begin with solving the critical issue of human resource management capacity of TVET institutions. This will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of TVET institutions in implementing human resource management and contribute to quality and motivation of teachers and thereby improve the quality of TVET education.

References

- Amin, M., Ismail, W. K. W., Rasid, S. Z. A., & Selemani, R. D. A. (2014). The impact of human resource management practices on performance Evidence from a Public University. *TQM Journal*, 26(2), 125-142. doi: 10.1108/TQM-10-2011-0062
- Armstrong, M. (2012a). *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice. 12th Edition* (Vol. 12). Philadelphia PA 19102, USA: Kogan Page.
- Armstrong, M. (2012b). *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. London: Kogan Page.

- Backes, C., & Burns, J. Z. (2008). New Career-Technical Teachers—What Gets Them, and Why is it Important to Know? Career Motivations of Trade and Industrial and Healthcare Science Second-Career Teachers. *Journal of Industrial and Teacher Education*, 45(1), 100-112.
- Brandl, J., & Pohler, D. (2010). The human resource department's role and conditions that affect its development: Explanations from Austrian CEOs. *Human Resource Management*, 49(6), 1025-1046. doi: 10.1002/hrm.20392.
- Blumberg, B., Cooper, D., & Schindler, P. (2011). *Business Research Methods* (Third European Edition ed.).
- Choy, S., & Haukka, S. (2009). Industrial attachments for instructors in TVET delivery *International handbook of education for the changing world of work* (pp. 1367-1382): Springer.
- Clinebell, S. K., & Clinebell, J. M. (2008). The Tension in Business Education Between Academic Rigor and Real-World Relevance: The Role of Executive Professors. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 7(1), 99-107.
- Coda, R., Coelho César, A. M. R. V., Bido, D. d. S., & Louffat, E. (2009). Strategic HR? A Study of the Perceived Role of HRM Departments in Brazil and Peru. *BAR - Brazilian Administration Review*, 6(1), 15-33.
- Ghebregiorgis, F., & Karsten, L. (2007). Human resource management and performance in a developing country: the case of Eritrea. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(2), 321-332. doi: 10.1080/09585190601102547
- Grijpstra, D. (2015). TVET Teacher Education in Africa Annex Report
- Kaaya, P. B. (2012). *The importance of competency based education and training (CBET) on industrial performance in Tanzania*. Paper presented at the TVET Institutions and Industries Collaborations Conference Program, 12th October.
- Kavura, R. M. (2003). *Challenges of public agency institutions in the public service reform process: the case of an emerging college*. *Journal of Public Sector Management: The International Journal of Comperative Management Practices in the Public Sector*, 1(1), 58-75.
- Kipkebut, D. J. (2010). Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Commitment in Higher Educational Institutions: A Kenyan Case. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 9(1/2), 45-70.
- Knobel, M. (2015). Sustaining Quality and Massification: Is it Possible? *International Journal of Higher Education* (80), 9-10.
- Kohont, A., & Nadoh Bergoc, J. (2010). On the Way into the Bologna Reform--A Consideration of the Quality and the Role of Human Resource Management in Higher Education System. *Quality of Higher Education*, 7, 12-36.
- Liu, Y., Combs, J. G., Ketchen Jr, D. J., & Ireland, R. D. (2007). The value of human resource management for organizational performance. *Business Horizons*, 50(6), 503-511. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2007.07.002>
- McGuire, D., Stoner, L., & Mylona, S. (2008). The Role of Line Managers as Human Resource Agents in Fostering Organizational Change in Public Services. *Journal of Change Management*, 8(1), 73-84. doi: 10.1080/14697010801937580
- Mohammed, J., Bhatti, M. K., Jariko, G. A., & Zehri, A. W. (2013). Importance of Human Resource Investment for Organizations and Economy: A Critical Analysis. *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, 7(1), 127-133.
- Rasheed, M. I., Aslam, H. D., & Sarwar, S. (2010). Motivational Issues for Teachers in Higher Education: A Critical Case of IUB. *Journal of Management Research*, 2(2), 1-23.
- Runhaar, P., & Runhaar, H. (2012). HR policies and practices in vocational education and training institutions: understanding the implementation gap through the lens of discourses. *Human Resource Development International*, 15(5), 609-625. doi: 10.1080/13678868.2012.710108
- Tafida, S. K., Clement, C. K., & Raihan, A. (2015). Determining the Causes for the Exodus of Technical Teachers from Teaching in Technical and Vocational Institutions to other Jobs in Katsina State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 7(2), 14-19.
- Tejumola, O. G. (2012). Human Resources Capacity Development for Effective Delivery of Education in Nigeria. *International Business & Management*, 5(1), 83-85. doi: 10.3968/j.ibm.1923842820120501.1250
- Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S., & Atkinson, C. (2011). *Human Resource Management* (Eighth ed.). Prentice Hall: Pearson Education Limited.
- Wilkin, T., & Nwoke, G. I. (2011). Career and Technical Education Teacher Shortage: A Successful Model for Recruitment and Retention. *Journal of sTEM Teacher Education*, 48(1), 22-35.