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Human Resource Development and Organisational Performance in Government-Sponsored Youth Empowerment Organisations in Kenya

*Fredrick Otieno Okongo, Kenya Methodist University, Nairobi, Kenya

Festus Riungu, KeMU Business School, Kenya Methodist University, Nairobi, Kenya

Susan Nzioki, KeMU Business School, Kenya Methodist University, Nairobi, Kenya

*Corresponding author's email: frednj@gmail.com**ARTICLE DETAILS****History***Revised format: Feb 2024**Available Online: Mar 2024***Keywords***Human Resource**Development, Balance**scorecard, Kenya Public**Sector, Youth Empowerment**Agencies, Public**Performance,***JEL Classification***M1, M2***ABSTRACT**

Purpose: Government-sponsored Youth Empowerment organisations (GSYEOs) are designed to skill, prepare, and empower the youths toward poverty eradication, formal employment, and self-reliance. However, poverty and unemployment among the youths in Kenya seem to be on an onward trajectory. Yet, scarce research has been conducted on the influence of strategic direction on the performance of GSYEOs. This study examines the influence of strategic direction and the performance of GSYEOs in Kenya, which is anchored on strategic leadership theory and measured using the Balance Score Card framework.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A descriptive research design was utilised, a random sample of five GSYEOs with a total population of 1089 employees was adopted, and a sample of 109 was derived. Simple analysis results show that the relationship between organisational performance and Human Resource Development is statistically significant as ($p < 0.05$), 65.0% of the variation in the organisational performance can be explained by the regression model ($R^2 = 0.65$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.644$, $F(1,64) = 118.748$, $P < 0.05$). Results showed that that 65% was a good fit for the organisational performance.

Implications/Originality/Value: The study recommends that the Government of Kenya allocate and prioritise funding for capacity building in Government-Sponsored Youth Empowerment Organizations.



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Introduction

Human capital is an asset that contributes to organisational effectiveness, human capital should, therefore, be regarded as a strategic partnership vital in delivering quality public service; it empowers employees and subordinates, helping them tap into the organisation's vision and looking beyond what is in it for them. The

day when employers considered their employees simply as service providers are long behind. Human resources must be seen from employees' perspective and as strategic partners in the digital age of innovation and creativity. When people join an organisation, they bring new skills that help the organisation to advance (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2023).

The study of human capital's strategic importance in general has been done thoroughly. However, scarce attention has been given to the measurement difficulties involved in the public sector and the role of human capital in the public sector. Despite these pitfalls, the public sector can borrow best practices from the private sector, such as innovation, learning, growth, and effective business processes.

Youth Empowerment

Internationally agreed frameworks, including the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, as well as other international frameworks such as Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419 of 2015 and 2018, respectively, acknowledge that young people are crucial and beneficial to the accomplishment of sustainable development, crisis prevention, and peace progress (UNDP, 2023). However, the number of young people worldwide is growing faster than the number of jobs and entrepreneurial possibilities, particularly for young people in developing nations. (Yami *et al.*, 2019).

The African Governments have made commitments to address the challenges of the youth. This commitment is shown through adopting the African Youth Charter (2006) and the Decade Plan of Action for Youth Development and Empowerment (2009 - 2018). African Youth Charter provides a legal and political framework for action that takes stock of the current situation of youths in Africa, including education, employment, and youth participation in regional, sub-regional, and national institutions (UNDP, 2015). In 2014, at a summit held in Kenya, the African heads of state adopted a declaration that stated that the youth unemployment crisis is a disaster that can undermine our economies, threaten the peace, and destabilise our institutions if not addressed (Sebahara, 2014)

Organisational Performance

Performance is how an organisation effectively achieves its planned objectives or goals. Organisational performance can be described as a set of financial and non-financial constructs that enables strategic leadership to evaluate whether strategic goals have been accomplished (Kaplan *et al.*, 1992; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Organisational performance is an organisation's ability to achieve its goals efficiently and effectively (Daft & Marcic, 2016). Berman and Hijal-Moghrabi (2022) define public performance as keeping public organisations relevant to society by ensuring that programs and policies connect to their most critical challenges.

Organisational performance can be defined as financial and non-financial constructs that enable strategic leadership to evaluate the extent to which organisational goals are accomplished (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1996). In the public sector, organisational performance refers to how well an agency produces actions and output consistent with its missionary objectives (Kim, 2005). Performance provides the basis for an organisation to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and provide remedies in case it veers from its course.

Measurable organisational goals like financial and economic performance can be used to identify organisational improvement (Faridi Zingir *et al.*, 2020). A company's performance can be justified by its ability to satisfy and maintain customers (Yasa *et al.*, 2020). According to Lola and Paul (2018), the performance of firms is measured by output and results, profitability, structures and processes, attitudes of staff, and the organisations' reactions to the outside environment.

Research indicates that performance has been measured using retained earnings, human capital efficiency, shareholder's equity, brand awareness, and market share. Shabaninejad *et al.* (2014) measured performance using net profits, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, return on investment, and new product

success rate. Kaplan and Norton (1996) developed a Balanced Scorecard consisting of customer focus, internal process, learning and growth, and financial focus.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan youths aged 20-24 and 25-29 recorded the highest percentage of Youth not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) at 27.5% and 24.1%, respectively (KNBS, 2019). However, GSYEOs are indicating high levels of success, such as 60,000 placements in jobs and businesses (Micro and Small Enterprises Authority (MSEA), 2022) and the development of over one million entrepreneurs (Youth Enterprise Development Fund, 2020). If the GSYEOs are a success story, why is the Government not increasing capacity and resources in the face of what Muia (2023) describes as a “ticking time bomb” of unemployment and despondency among the youth? This study seeks to discover strategic leadership in the GSYEOs, its influence on organisational performance, and the role of digital capability in the relationship.

There is a scarcity of strategic leadership in organisations. Some scholars propose that this should be a compelling invitation for more study in this area because decisions taken by strategic leaders affect organisational performance (Ambilichu *et al.*, 2022; Wakhisi, 2021). No study has been found in this research that has sought to establish the impact of human resource development on the performance of GSYEOs.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the influence of human resource development on the performance of Government-sponsored Youth Empowerment Organisations (GSYEOs).

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested according to the aims and objectives of the research;

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between human resource development and performance of government-sponsored youth empowerment organisations (GSYEOs).

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This theory was first introduced by Chandler (1962), who emphasised that strategic leaders should be strategic and not operational. However, strategic leadership theory gained prominence from Hambrick and Mason's (1984) upper echelons theory, which proposes that top management's underlying knowledge, experience, value, and preferences influence how they respond to the environment. Hambrick and Mason (1984) further argued that leaders must take a central role as they are accountable for everything that happens in the organisation. Strategic leadership evolved but was grounded by Finkelstein *et al.* (2009) as leadership continued to develop across the world in the face of complex, dynamic environments together with advancement and disruptions of information technology, there has been a re-think on the part of management on how they can deliver satisfactory value to higher level management.

Empirical Review

Shrouf *et al.* (2020) examined the mediating function of productivity in the link between human resources and strategic performance. The research aimed to determine whether the productivity of the banking industry in Jordan is mediating the relationship between strategic performance and human resources from the perspectives of senior management and managers of functional units. All 26 of Jordan's commercial banks were represented among the study's population. The findings from the 371 respondents showed that human resources positively impacted strategic performance and productivity. The study found that productivity positively mediated the relationship between human resources and the strategic performance of the bank. The context of the study was in the banking and private sector in Asia, while the current research is in the African public sector.

Nwachukwu *et al.* (2020) investigated the link between employee commitment to strategy execution and strategic effectiveness, with organisational policy as a mediator. The research used a survey approach to gather information from 105 workers of the four international companies active in Nigeria's mobile telecommunications market. According to this study, organisational policy and personnel commitment to strategy execution are directly, positively, and substantially associated with strategy performance. Organisational policy was found to moderate the relationship between employee commitment and strategic performance. The context was on private-sector, multinational firms in Nigeria, while the current research is based on the public sector in Kenya. Previous research examined organisational policy as a mediating variable; the current study examines digital capability as a moderating variable.

Salman *et al.* (2022) examined the impact of various human resource management practices on the organisational performance of banks in India. A convenience sampling technique surveyed 325 employees from four banks in India. Structural equation modelling for hypothesis validation was used, while the construct's psychometric properties were established through confirmatory factor analysis. The findings confirmed a positive and significant influence training and development of banks in India.

Research Methodology

Strategic leadership in GSYEOs was objectively measured by collecting data on human resource development using a validated questionnaire. The questionnaire was then used to test hypotheses that had been formulated earlier. A positive paradigm was adopted because the researcher intended to observe and measure the phenomenon accurately and did not wish the findings to be influenced by the researcher's subjectivity.

Research design provides the framework that provides relationships between study variables (Toyon, 2023). A descriptive research design was adopted. Dubey and Kothari (2022) argue that descriptive studies form the basis for analytical, experimental, and quasi-experimental studies and help develop hypotheses. This view is supported by Kothari (2004), who posits that descriptive research enables data to be tabulated and analysed, which includes statistical computation such as averages, percentages, and various coefficients must be worked out. Probability and sampling analysis can be used

The survey unit of analysis consisted of all the 1089 employees working in GSYEOs according to data from their human resource departments (Table 1.0). The sample frame was identified from a list of government-sponsored youth Empowerment Organisations on the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis's website (Mokwaro & Nyamu, 2018). A random sample of five government-sponsored youth Empowerment Organisations (GSYEOs) was selected.

Table 1
Target Population

Organisations	Target Population
KYEOP/NYOTA	20
HELB	245
AJIRA	192
STATE DEPT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS	598
NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL	11
UWEZO FUND	23
Total	1089

Source: HR Departments of respective organisations as of February 2024 (2024)

Stratified random sampling was used because the population consisted of groups from different government organisations. The employees of GSYEOs were grouped according to strata based on the programs they worked for. A percentage based on the total population was derived and used to calculate a sample from each program (as shown in Table 2).

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), a randomly chosen sample of about 10% of the population is fairly representative of the population being studied; Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) proposed a sample of not less than 10% of the target population to be sufficient. This study sampled 10% of the population of middle and senior-level management employees of GSYEOs. Therefore, a sample of 109 senior and middle-level employees was selected using 0.10 as the sampling ratio/factor. The sample was proportionately distributed across all five strata of organisations, as indicated in Table 1.1.

Table 2
Distribution of employees in each of the GSYEOs

Program Name	Number of employees	Sampling Ratio	Percentage
KYEOP/NYOTA	20	0.10	2
HELB	245	0.10	25
AJIRA	192	0.10	19
STATE DEPT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS	598	0.10	60
UWEZO FUND	23	0.10	2
NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL	11	0.10	1
Total	1089		109

In this study, 109 questionnaires were administered, and 66 were returned, resulting in a 61% response rate. According to Kihara *et al.* (2016), 60% is good, while 70% is particularly good.

Research Results

The Human resource development variable was anchored on strategic leadership theory. Strategic leadership enables followers to focus on accomplishing firm-level objectives by creating long-term objectives through purpose and vision, acquiring, developing, and nurturing assets and skills for long-term competitive advantages. Novitasari *et al.* (2021) stated several characteristics that describe strategic leadership as having compassion, understanding the perception and feelings of subordinates' ability to delegate, self-awareness, and understanding how their actions impact others.

The construct was anchored on the following items: acquiring and deploying the right skills, continuous development of skills, personal development of human assets, and strategic human asset planning.

Table 3
Descriptive Results for Human Resource Development

Items	Mean	STD
Q1 My skill sets are well aligned with my current role	4.09	0.988
Q2 Our skills are constantly being upgraded in line with the changing environment	3.71	0.991
Q3 Our leaders <i>prioritise</i> our training and development	3.52	1.069
Q4 Adequate training is conducted and is relevant to the current and future needs of our roles	3.55	1.097
Q5 My supervisor encourages me to be the best that I can be	4.14	0.924
Q6 My supervisor constantly updates us on the requirements of our roles in line with the changing environment	4.00	0.836
Q7 My supervisor sees that my interest is given due consideration	4.02	0.845
Q8 Sufficient budget is allocated to our training and development	2.92	1.186
Q9 My skills are well utilised in my current role	3.94	0.840
Q10 Our leaders have given us insight into what the work environment will look like in the next 5-10 years	3.40	1.185

Q11	We are prepared or are being prepared for the future work	3.56	1.006
	Mean	3.723	0.724

Source: Research data (2024)

The overall composite mean on this variable was $M = 3.723$ on a scale of 1 to 5 with a standard deviation ($SD = 0.724$).

Acquisition and deployment of the right skills were measured using the following items: Whether employees' skill sets are well aligned with their current roles ($M=4.09$, $STD=0.988$) and whether employees' skills are well utilised in their current roles ($M=3.94$, $STD=0.840$). The two variables seem identical, but skills can be well aligned with the current role but not being utilised or fully utilised in the role. With a mean item above 4.0, the respondents agreed that their skillsets aligned with their current goals and that the skills were well utilised.

Continuous development of skills is important because, as Finkelstein *et al.* (2009) argued, leadership is faced with a dynamic environment, advancement, and technology disruption; there is a need to rethink how human resources are acquired, developed, and retained. Continuous development of human resources was measured using the following variables: whether employees' skills are constantly being upgraded in line with the changing environment ($M=3.71$ and $STD=0.991$) and whether the supervisors constantly update us on the requirements of our roles in line with the changing environment ($M=4.00$, 0.836). With a mean item of 4.0, respondents agreed that their skillsets are constantly being upgraded or that they are encouraged to upgrade their skillsets. Novitasari *et al.* (2021) argue that a strategic leader articulates through clear communication to the employees the vision of the organisation and how it enhances their roles

Personal development of human assets was measured because humans, unlike any other assets, are human and require a human touch. This construct was measured using the following items: whether the supervisor encourages employees to be their best ($M=4.14$, $STD=0.924$) and whether the supervisor sees that employees' interests are given due consideration ($M=4.02$, 0.845). The results show that GSYEOs have created an environment where employees are encouraged and supported to grow.

Strategic human asset planning is important because of the complex environment and disruption in technology as well as Political, Environmental, and Societal (especially population and culture), Technological (disruptions brought by technological innovation), Environmental factors (like COVID-19) abrupt changes and disruptions), and Legislation. A dynamic environment requires strategic leadership with a long-term perspective and is prepared to deal with future challenges. The following items measured this construct: Adequate training is conducted and is relevant to our roles' current and future needs ($M=3.55$ and $STD=1.097$). The result shows that the response varied between agree and disagree, with the mean barely crossing the threshold. This means there is contention on the adequacy of training in GSYEOs. These variables were designed to test the leadership's preparedness for the future demands of their human assets. As the world evolves and technology advances, so should strategic leaders. The leadership should be able to audit their current resources and propose future improvements.

According to Finkelstein *et al.* (2009), strategic leadership is futuristic in its approaches. Budget allocation shows commitment and preparedness to implement the strategic plan. Knowing what challenges the future will bring is one thing, but it is another thing to be committed to addressing those challenges. Regarding whether a sufficient budget is allocated to employees' training and development ($M=2.92$, $STD=1.186$), with the mean item of 2.92, the respondents disagreed that a sufficient budget had been allocated to them. Strategic leaders prepare the organisation for the future, so they are strategic and not operational. They scan the environment, predict the future, and prepare for it. The items include whether employees are prepared or are being prepared for future work ($M=3.56$, $STD=1.006$) and whether their leaders had given them insight into what the work environment will look like in the next 5-10 years" ($M=3.4$, $STD=1.185$). The

respondents were close to the borderline in their responses; however, they lean more towards the positive, which shows that the employees are prepared for future roles and how to position themselves effectively.

Descriptive Results for Performance

Performance was measured using The Balance Score Card (BSC). Traditional financial accounting measures like return on investments and earnings per share are insufficient. They can give misleading signals because they do not consider other perspectives, such as human capital, technological assets, and intellectual properties (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).

Summary of Organisational Performance

Table 4 summarises organisational performance from the Balance Score Card framework, which comprises an internal focus perspective, a customer relationship perspective, and a learning and growth perspective. The combination of all the items was used to measure organisational performance.

Table 4
Summary Organisational Performance

Variables	Mean	SD
Internal Focus	3.763	0.82
Learning and Growth	3.624	0.802
Customer Relationship	3.70	0.700
Mean	3.69	0.685

Source: Research data (2024)

Table 5 summarizes descriptive results for Human resource development and Organizational performance as measured by the Balance Score Card framework.

Table 5
Summary Descriptive Results

Variables	Mean	SD
Human resource development	3.71	0.736
Organisational Performance	3.69	0.69

Source: Research data (2024)

The reliability test was further conducted on the performance variables. The three sub-variables (Internal focus, customer relationship, and learning and growth) derived from the balanced scorecard that constitutes organisational performance were tested for reliability. The items that assess customer relationships had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.924 and a factor analysis score of 0.860. The items on learning and growth had a reliability score of 0.787 and a factor analysis score of 0.808. Internal Process had a reliability score of 0.922 and a factor analysis of 0.870. Therefore, all three sub-variables that constituted organisational performance had Cronbach's alpha of over 0.7. Reliability analysis was performed on predictor variables, and Human Resource Development had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.922 and factor analysis of 0.739.

Table 6
Reliability tests results

Construct		Cronbach's alpha	Factor Analysis	Sig
Organisational Performance	Internal Process	0.922	0.870	<0.001
	Learning and	0.842	0.808	<0.001

	Growth			
	Customer Relationship	9.43	0.860	<0.001
Human Resources		0.886	0.739	<0.001

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis examined the relationships between Organisational Performance (comprising Internal focus, Customer relationship, and Learning and growth). Organisational Performance was correlated with Human Resource Development.

Table 7
Correlation coefficient results

	Human Resource Development	Performance
Human Resource Development	1	.801**
Performance	.801**	1

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The correlation coefficient varies from -1 to 1; the further a value is from 0, the higher the correlation between two variables. The correlation matrix shows that items positively correlate with each other. The result (Table 7) suggests that human resource development had a significant positive linear relationship with organisational performance ($r=0.801$, $p < 0.001$),

Regression Analysis for Organisational Performance and Human Resource Development

Regression assumptions were tested for normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and autocorrelation using statistics and graphs. Khatun(2020) argues that no statistical tool to assess normality is as powerful as a well-chosen graph because graphs are less susceptible to sample sizes than statistical methods. Therefore, assumptions for regression were tested and met through graphs and statistics.

Table 8
Model Summary for Human Resource Development on Organisational Performance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df2	Sig. Change	F	Durbin-Watson
.801a	0.641	0.635	0.414	0.641	114.317	1	64	<.001		1.971

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human resource development

The relationship between organisational performance and human resource development is statistically significant as ($p < 0.05$), 64.1 % of the variation in the organisational performance can be explained by the regression model ($R^2=0.641$, $\Delta R^2=0.635$, $F(1,64) = 114.32$, $P < 0.001$). Other variables explain the variation of (35.9%). The positive correlation ($r=0.801$) indicates that organisational performance also tends to increase when human resource development increases. Therefore, human resource development significantly predicts organisational performance.

Table 9
ANOVA (F-Test) Analysis for Human resource development and organisational performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.580	1	19.580	114.3	<.001 ^b
					17	

Residual	10.962	64	0.17 1
Total	30.542	65	

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resources

An F-test was performed to test the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis stated that

Ho: *There is no significant relationship between human resource development and the performance of government-sponsored youth empowerment organisations (GSYEOs).* Table 9 above indicates that the F-statistic is less than 0.001, which signifies a strong positive relationship between human resources and organisational performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results confirmed that the relationship between Human Resource Development and performance is statistically significant and that Human Resource Development can predict the organisational performance of GSYEOs.

Discussion

The correlation analysis in Table 7 shows that human resource development and organisational performance are positively correlated. ($r=0.801$, $p < 0.05$), the linear regression shows that the relationship between organisational performance and human resource development is statistically significant.

Abdullah and Sofian (2012) researched the relationship between intellectual capital and corporate performance. Among the types of intellectual capital studied, human capital had a positive correlation coefficient of ($r=0.533$), which is close to the current research at $r=0.801$. This shows a significant positive relationship with corporate performance. This result, however, contradicted previous research, which indicated that human capital was the most important capital, arguing that it was indeed relational capital followed by spiritual capital, the most important form of intellectual capital. However, it agrees with the current research that human capital statistically and significantly influences organisational performance.

Ajisafe and Balogun (2015) researched the influence of capital management on organisational performance using a descriptive research design of correlation type and data collected from 62 senior, permanent employees across 5 banks out of 12; the results indicated that human capital management had a positive and significant relationship with performance. The research recommended that training and development should be given a high priority. At the same time, workers should be made to develop their careers and not just used for organisational growth. Correlation analysis $r = 0.297$, which is similar to the findings of the current research. The research recommended enhancing specific human capital; the organisations should employ the right people for the right job, continuously develop by making employees aware of the latest human capital practices, and prioritise training and development.

Aman-Ullah *et al.* (2022) conducted a study on human capital and organisational performance in the hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia, and data was collected through survey questionnaires from 356 managers in the hospitality industry. Using convenience sampling and a partial least square structural equation model for data analysis, the research found that human capital capacity forms a significantly positive relationship with organisational performance at $p = 0.010$. This research recommends that since hospitality is a service-based industry, it requires professionals with advanced education, extensive experience and strongly committed individuals who can offer intellectual and complex services.

Widianto *et al.* (2022) researched dynamic managerial capabilities in the public sector in Indonesia, and 313 managers and their immediate subordinates participated in the study. The results showed that dynamic managerial capabilities (managerial cognitive ability, managerial social capital, and managerial human capital) are positively related to organisational performance. The research recommends that middle managers should be equipped to embrace change in the organisation through communication at different staff levels and uniting vision and mission with organizational members.

Miriti *et al.* (2021) researched human resource development and organisational performance of SACCOs in the Kenyan context. Utilizing the strategic leadership model and transformational leadership theory, a cross-sectional survey of 133 managers found that human resource development significantly influenced organisational performance. The results indicated that human resource development was average, and hence, SACCOs' leadership needs to practice human resource development at a higher dimension, as manager behaviours can encourage organisational performances.

Recommendation

GSYEOs need to develop their internal capacities to effectively deliver quality services in a complex business environment. Workers improve an organisation's performance and profitability (Kraja & Spahija, 2023). GSYEOs should regard their employees as strategic partners with the knowledge and ideas needed to advance the organisation and deliver quality services to its constituents.

The research suggests that the Government should provide enough funding for training and capacity development in Government-Sponsored Youth Empowerment Organisations (GSYEOs). As the world advances and the population of youth increases, there is likely to be a scramble for scarce resources. GSYEOs must not only manage scarce resources but also create additional resources. Capacity development will prepare the leadership for the complex challenges that the future will bring.

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