

## **Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices in the Public Service Delivery Sectors. Case Study of MORUWASA, Morogoro, Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

*This study assessed how the key practice areas are executed in Morogoro Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities (MORUWASA), Morogoro, Tanzania. Organizations consider human resources as capital, asset and investment. Individuals have impact in the performance of an organizations. However, few studies have examined how levers of HRM are carried out. This study confined itself to two models of HRM practices: The Marching Model and The Harvard Framework Model. The study used two research paradigms: positivism and phenomenology. It was largely descriptive and explanatory, and employed case study design. Qualitative and quantitative data were generated using focus group discussion, documentary review, questionnaires and interviews. The data were analysed using content analysis. The findings revealed that authorities were constrained by ministerial interferences and improper performance appraisal systems. Legal framework and institutional set up were in place but lacked a way for practicing HRM levers. The HRM practice areas were carried out in a policy vacuum. The policy prescriptions and gaps were acute where policies were in place. Employees' perceptions on HRM practices were negative. The study concludes that employees were not recruited on the basis of equal opportunities and selection and promotion do not also consider gender. Performance Appraisal process did not discuss the issues of career aspiration and development plan and pay/benefits of the employees. The study recommends Legal reforms, freedom of authorities from political interference, and capacity building for Human Resources.*

**Keywords;** Human Resource Management, Public services Policies and Practices, Legal Plans, Institutional Plans.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the study was to explore to what extent and manner were the key levers (practices areas) of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Public Services Delivery Sectors in Tanzania. It was a Case of Tanzanian Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities (UWASAs). The study was timely since UWASAs were undergoing reforms to improve sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and it attempted to contribute to literature on HRM in the developing countries specifically in Tanzania. Throughout 1990's the water sector in Tanzania was reforming to improve service delivery (Act No. 8 of 1997). Since 1997, the application of key Human Resource Management (HRM) practice areas (key levers) in the Public Services Delivery Sector (authorities) have been very limited and were randomly applied. This resulted into inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Little is known on how the HRM function is carried out in Public Services Delivery Sectors. According to Cherrington (1995) and Noon (1992), the terms Personnel Management and Human Resource Management in the United States are generally used to refer to the same processes. There is a dearth of literature in management science and in particular HRM literature in Africa and specifically in Tanzania Public Service Delivery Sectors (Urban Water Supply and

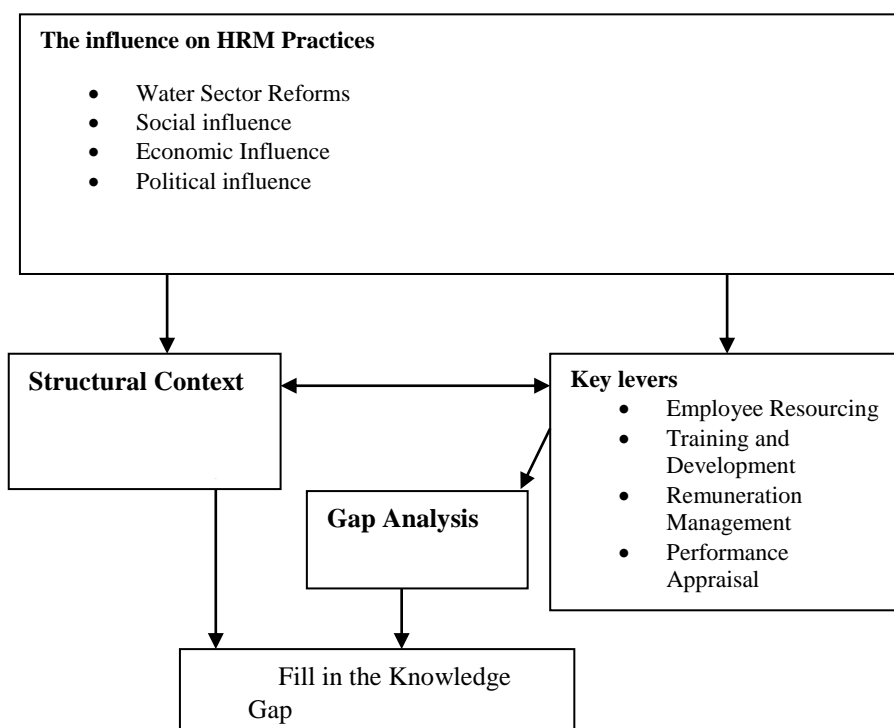
Sewerage Authorities). Some studies addressed staff management issues in generalized fashion, biased in engineering discipline and have not shed light on the manner and extent to which the key practice areas of HRM were carried out.

Literature shows that attempts have been made to examine staff management in the Public Sectors like UWASAs. The focus has been on authorities' reform packages, structural changes, implementation and implications, HRM policies and practices in use. The literature on HRM in the Public Services Delivery Sector is scarce but even the little that is available does not cover the state of staff management in the Public Services Delivery Sector context.

According to Milanzi (2007), little has been written on the state of HRM in the Public Services Delivery Sector. No sufficient attention has been given to studying the execution of the key practice areas of HRM in the Public Services Delivery Sectors like UWASAs in general and Morogoro in particular. Studies have been narrowed in focus and limited in scope. The integrative and interdependence dimensions of the key practice areas HRM have been neglected. This study investigated the manner and extent to which the key practice areas in HRM are carried out in the Public Services Delivery Sector, focusing on Morogoro Water Authority.

Milanzi (ibid.) explains that the overall objective of Tanzania Public Water Services Delivery Sector Reforms is to improve the health standard and living conditions of the Tanzanians through improved water supply and sanitation. Both components resulted in reduction of water and hygiene related diseases. Proper practice of HRM key levers in integrative and interdependence in most Public Services Delivery Sector reforms has proved positive results to employee's healthy psychological contract and better performance. However, after establishment of Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities Services Delivery Sector Reforms, state of art of HRM key levers proper practices have been neglected, the key HRM levers were insufficiently studied and no attention made to explore the manner and extent to which HRM key levers were executed in Public Services Delivery Sectors focusing on Tanzania UWASAs.

This study explored how the HRM key levers were executed in Tanzania Public Services Delivery Sectors, a case of Morogoro Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authority. Specifically, the study aimed at assessing: major factors that influenced the management of staff in Public Services Delivery Sector, how the legal and institutional arrangements affected the management of employees and how Human Resources key levers are practised in Urban Water Authorities.

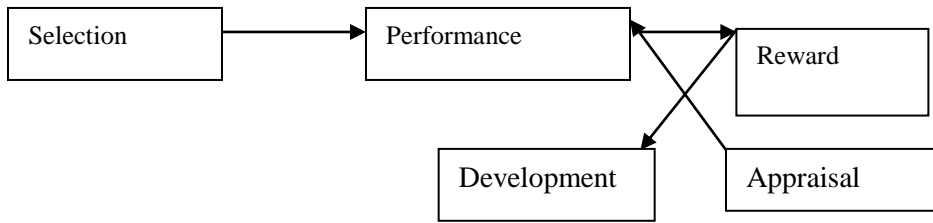


**Figure 1: A Road Map for Studying HRM in UWASAs**

*Source: The Researchers (2015)*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

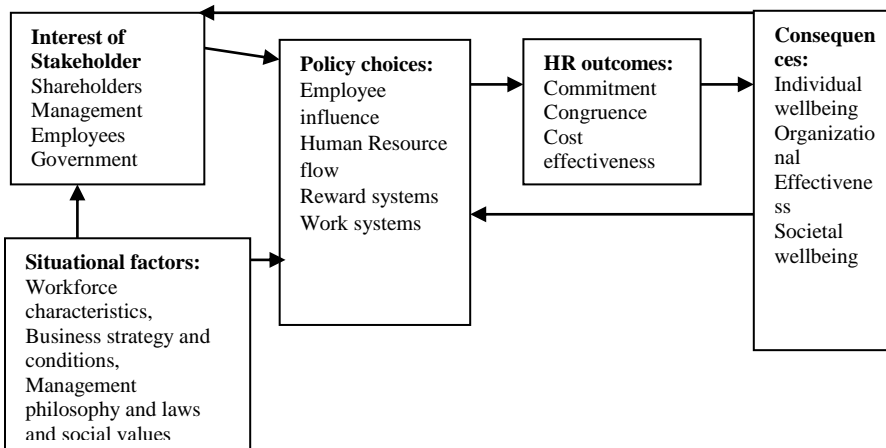
Hornby (2005) defines a model as a simple description of a system used for explaining how something works or calculating what might happen. In agreeing with Devanna (1984), this study confined itself to two models of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices because they complement each other. The models seem to be important tools for data collection and gap analysis between the theory and practices with regards to the implementation of HRM in Morogoro Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities. The Marching Model of HRM (Human Resource Management Cycle) was developed by the Michigan School. The proponents of this model introduced the concept of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in the management of employment relationship. HRM strategy takes into account the interests of all stakeholders, employees, owners and management of the organization. The usefulness of this model lies in the selection, appraisal reward and development. This is an approach to making decisions on the intentions and plans of the organization concerning the employment relationship policies and practices related to HRM.



**Figure 2: The Marching Model of HRM**

Source: Devanna et al, 1984

The Second model called The Harvard Framework Model was developed by Beer et al (1985) at Harvard School. It is also known as ‘The map of HRM Territory’. The model focuses a range of stakeholders and contextual factors which influence HRM in organizations. The model dealt with human resource categories, namely: employee influence, human resource flows, reward systems and work systems (Beer et al 1985). This model stresses the involvement and participation of employees in decision making at work place. This model is useful in this study because it incorporates recognition of stakeholder interests, recognizes the importance of trade-offs, between the interests of owners and those of employees as well as between various interest groups.



**Figure 3: The Harvard Framework Model of HRM**

Source: Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Quinn Mills and Walton (1985)

With reference to Armstrong (1991), the term Human Resources Management (HRM) is defined as “a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization’s most valued assets (the people) who contribute to the achievement of the objectives” Keenoy (1997) explains that the term Human Resources Management has emerged recently and used all over the World by Executives, Sociologists, lawyers, economists, Accountants, Laymen, illiterate Peasants, Business people, academicians, Religious people and practitioners. In this study, the concept of “Human Resources Management” is defined as a body of knowledge and set of policies, practices and processes that are involved in attracting, motivating, developing and retaining employees in order to enable an organization to accomplish its goals. Such activities include recruitment and selection, training and development, employee performance appraisal and rewards management.

Empirically, Baruch and Clansy (2000) wrote an article on “Managing AIDS in Tanzania: Human Resource Management challenges in Tanzania”. They contend that HRM is not restricted to specific boundaries but they do not indicate how the concept is interpreted in Tanzania. This study aimed at finding out the meaning that practitioners attach to the concept ‘HRM’ in Public Service Delivery Sectors (UWASAs). It focused on the two extreme interpretations of the concept of HRM as explicated in the conceptual frameworks developed by Guest and Storey in the following two camps.

As said by Legge (1995) and Torrington and Hall (1996), the first camp includes writers who contend that HRM is a body of knowledge and set of practices that regulate the employment relationship. In developing countries such as Tanzania, the terms ‘Manpower Management’, ‘Manpower Administration’ and ‘Personnel’ have been used in the Public Sectors for a long time; for example: TANESCO, TTCL, Ministry of Finance, Regional Secretariats Office, TPDF, Higher Learning Institutions, Roman Catholics Administration, Hospitals, SIDO, Cooperative Societies, and Financial Institutions. In line with Beardwell and Holden (1994), the second camp includes writers who argue that HRM denotes a qualitatively different philosophy and approach to the management of employment relationship. HRM is conceptualized as a more ‘sophisticated’ approach to the management of employment policies and practices, which is quite different from other approaches including personnel management.

In terms of Open Performance Review Appraisal System (OPRAS), staff can be demotivated if: they are unclear about their responsibilities or performance standards, if they are not informed about how well they are doing or if they feel that their performance appraisals are unfair. The pre-requisites for effective OPRAS include:

- a) Express performance requirements in terms of attainable goals.
- b) Get staff and Managers to agree on those goals and how to achieve them.
- c) Encourage Managers to appraise staff for good performance but also get them to provide regular feedback.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used two research paradigms: positivism (deductive, Observable and measurable) and phenomenology (qualitative information) but the dominant research paradigm was phenomenological paradigm. The aim of the paradigm was to obtain deep details of the situation and within this context. Consistent with Hussey and Hussey (1997), this study was largely descriptive and explanatory, and employed case study design which is one of the research designs. Its aim was to achieve depth since it was the purpose of this study. In order to explore and understand the forces that have impacted on HRM in the UWASAs over time, as well as to investigate the manner and extent to which key HRM functions were carried out in UWASAs, the case study was appropriate. Researchers visited Morogoro UWASA.

In line with Shishiwa (2016), the four research methodologies namely, Interviews, Focus Group Discussion, Questionnaire and Documentary Review were used for collecting data. Data gathering relied on multiple methods and techniques. Interviews and focus group discussion were most useful because of their flexible characteristics. Interviews were conducted with key informants at Morogoro Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities (MORUWASA). Focus Group

Discussions (FGD) were used with Human Resources Officer, Public Relations officers, Finance and Administration Managers, Business Managers, System Administrators, Data Entry Clerks, Personal Secretaries and Sewerage Engineers. This study employed the Focus Group Discussion method because knowledge is socially constructed; hence created by dialogue interactions. Four focused group discussions were organized from MORUWASA and 20 participants participated.

In keeping with Chale (2007), questionnaire items were used to collect information because they covered a wider coverage of respondents with minimum expenses in terms of money, time and effort. The questionnaires facilitate “greater coverage that yields greater validity through large and more representative sample” The questionnaires gathered data from employees in different managerial and non-managerial grades in UWASAs, and generated useful information on the employees’ perceptions and feelings regarding the key practice areas of HRM.

**Table 1: Number of Respondents**

<b>Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sampled (Percentage)</b>
Interview	60	16 %
Focus Group Discussion	60	33 %
Questionnaires	60	100 %

*Source: Researchers (2015)*

According to Shishiwa (op. cit.), documentary materials are rich source of information especially in social practices. The study of the manner to which HRM practices were carried out in UWASAs demanded a critical review of documents. This method generated data on HRM policies and key practice areas, legal framework and institutional arrangements that governed HRM practices in UWASAs.

The pilot study was conducted in Mbeya UWASA prior to the official field work in Morogoro UWASA. After pilot study, the questionnaire items were translated into Kiswahili language and planned road map was changed by adding one key HRM practice area known as Performance Appraisal because it was very important item. All Public sectors were practicing OPRAS. Training and Development items like training budget and actual budget expenditure were added.

The decision on data analysing approaches and techniques was made during the research design stage. The raw data from questionnaires were analysed by using content analysis. The data analysis exercise began with coding process. The data collected was re-arranged into statistics to simplify the analysis and interpretation.

This research was carried out in Morogoro where Public Services Delivery Sectors (MORUWASA) look more or less differently in implementing the Human Resources Management. The human Resources practices made the conduct of this research very significant hence suggest the possible ways to modify the UWASAs policies, legal framework and institutional set-up in order to bring equality in the country. The area consisted of one Public Sectors Delivery Services (Morogoro, Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authority). Researchers based on the number of employees to determine the sample size, the composition of the target population and characteristics of the sample. The multistage sampling technique was used to determine the sample.

The study took three months to complete and covered the Morogoro region. Each interview took approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

## RESULTS

The first research objective aimed at determining the major factors that influenced the management of staff in public services delivery sector, i.e. after establishment of urban water authorities. The effects of the re-organization of the water sector in 1997 were found out. Theoretically, the reforms aimed to improve the delivery of services. However, the reforms were too political and theoretical. The respondents noted that practically, the delivery of the services, the management, the employees, the problems of inefficiency and effectiveness remained as they were before 1997. So, this challenges Milanzi (2007) who explained that the overall objective of Tanzania Public Water Services Delivery Sector Reforms was to improve the health standard and living conditions of Tanzanians through improved water supply and sanitation

The reforms addressed minimally the human resources management. The levers of recruitment & selection, training and development, performance appraisal, remuneration and rewards were considered in general terms. While responding to recruitment and selection process, 33.3% of the respondents affirmed that the process was fair. However, about 22.3 % of the total respondents indicated that the recruitment and selection process was not fair at all. In terms of training and development, on the one hand, 27% of the respondents were satisfied with the training and development programmes. On the other hand, 17 8% of the respondents were not satisfied and 11% of the respondents were generally strongly unsatisfied. With reference to the assessment of the feelings from the employees on rewards, 55.6 % of the respondents said that they were feeling being rewarded fairly for the amount of effort they put in their jobs. On the contrary, 22.2% of the respondents said that ‘no probably not; while 5.6% responded that ‘no definitely not’. This finding concurs with Devanna (1984), one of the proponents of the Matching Model, who said that the reward system is one of the most underutilized and mishandled managerial tools for driving organizational performance;

Generally, the findings partly confirm what Milanzi, (2007) said that after establishment of Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities Services Delivery Sector Reforms; the state of the art of HRM key levers proper practices were neglected. MORUWASA became autonomous theoretically because, sometimes, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation gave directions and terms of reference to MORUWASA. However, the water sector reforms have failed to have sustainable provision of reliable water supply and sanitation services especially in some urban areas and the areas which are close to urban (suburbs). Participants said that political and economic factors impeded / facilitated the implementation of HRM strategies.

The researchers also assessed how the legal and institutional arrangements were affecting the management of employees. The respondents gave the institutional and legal gaps which affected the practice of key levers of HRM. These included individualism, self-centeredness, egoism, tribalism and colour segregation. 34.6% of the respondents affirmed that merit, seniority, qualification, tribal / ethnicity, area criteria, social and political connection for all, gender considerations, who knows who, equal opportunities for all regardless of one’s tribe, ethnic, region, filial and social connections, backdoor, corruption and bribery, discipline biasness

were used during the process of employee selection and promotion of UWASAs employees. Only 24.7% of the participants disagreed that the criteria were not relied upon in the selection and promotion. The data show the presence of individualism self-centeredness, egotism, tribalism and colour segregation. This is a contradiction to what Baruch and Clansy (2000) contend that HRM is not restricted to specific boundaries

The participants stated that the HRM department supervises and ensures that all strategies are implemented to improve working conditions of the employees. It was also said that the male system influences or affects HRM policies and practices because most of the technical work is done by males. With reference to gender considerations, 22.2 % of the respondents indicated that gender was not used as a criterion in selection and promotion but 38.9% of the participants said that gender was relied upon. The rest were not sure. Concerning the legislations governing the management of employment relationship at MORUWASA, the respondents indicated that the legislations should consider the education offered by VETA. Standard seven leavers should also be considered in employment. The staff regulations, scheme of service and other government policies related to employment issues were the impacts of politicization at MORUWASA with 55.6% of the participants agreeing that merit, seniority and qualifications criteria and were relied upon in the selection and promotion.

The third objective of the study aimed at assessing how HRM key levers including Employee resourcing, Training and Development, Remuneration and Rewards and performance appraisal were practised at MORUWASA. According to the respondents, the employment opportunities were advertised in the mass media and the recruitment and selection process was fair. The decision for promotion and appointment to the post of Managers was fair. 50% of employees said that the recruitment and selection process was transparent while 50% said that it was not. The criteria of merit, seniority and qualification were used in the selection. The majority disagreed with the reliability of tribalism, ethnicity and regional criteria. The responses showed that gender was not considered in the selection and promotion. Also 'who knows who' as a criterion was disagreed by many of the respondents. Most of the respondents agreed with the reliability of equal opportunities for all regardless of one's tribe, ethnicity and region. According to the respondents, backdoor, corruption, bribery and disciplinary bias were not relied upon in the selection and promotion of MORUWASA employees. However, this denies what Milanzi (2007) said that after establishment of Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Authorities Services Delivery Sector Reforms; the state of the art of HRM key levers proper practices were not neglected.

The last objective intended to identify the implications of the study findings for the authority on HRM policy and practice at MORUWASA. The formulation process of the HRM strategy needs to involve the staff members but MORUWASA involved the management only. The formulation of HRM plan/strategy/mission should not only consider salaries only but also recruitment and selection, performance appraisal process, Training and development and rewards. Furthermore, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and Political and Official Executives should consider the cost and implementation implications when setting objectives. The data show that there was segregation in terms of sex and religion. The management and the authorities concern should consider these elements during the process of recruitment and selection. Not only that but also experienced employees should be recruited to teach unexperienced.



Some employees were not happy with the recruitment and selection process as it was not based on equal opportunities for all. The authority concerned should make sure that equality was observed in the process of employees resourcing. Tribalism, ethnicity, regional criteria and gender bias should be avoided. The implication substantiated what Devanna (1984) said that HRM strategy should take into account the interests of all stakeholders. Besides, the process should be frequent because the sampled employees said that it was infrequent. The performance appraisal process should involve the staff especially on the issues of career aspiration and career development plan and the pay or benefits of the employees. The perceptions on the usefulness of performance Appraisal were as follows: five (5) participants out of fourteen (14) said that it was not stimulating and recognizing achievement. Besides, six (6) respondents out of eighteen (18), said that performance appraisal was not useful in counselling. The training and development opportunities should be discussed and increased. The lack of discussion leads to performance failure. The employers should encourage staff to develop new skills. The findings show that some employees have not attended any course for two consecutive years. A few staff attended the training but did not get relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes to perform their job well. So, the bosses and subordinates should discuss the training needs. The findings show that many employees were not satisfied with the rewards and benefits they received. Hence, fair rewards should be given to the staff for the effort they put on in their job.

## CONCLUSION

The general research objective was to explore to what extent and manner were the key levers (practice areas) of HRM at MORUWASA implemented. The findings show that HRM was addressed minimally by the reforms of 1997 because the reforms were too political and theoretical. For example, generally the recruitment and selection process were not transparent because of failure to consider gender. Not only that but also training and development, performance appraisal, remuneration and rewards were considered in general terms. Performance Appraisal process did not involve the staff in terms of career aspiration, development plan and benefits of the employees. Furthermore, individualism, self-centeredness, egoism, tribalism and colour segregation were to some extent, the institutional and legal gaps which affected the practice of key levers of HRM. Besides, the rewards system was underutilized and mishandled managerial tool. Finally, by and large, political and economic factors were impeding the implementation of HRM practice.

With reference to the findings, the following recommendations are made: recruitment and selection process should consider gender. Furthermore, the performance appraisal process should involve staff. Finally, MORUWASA needs to be autonomous practically. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation may intervene and give directives when asked by the Authority and if the needs arise. Generally, proper Practices of HRM key levers like Proper employee resourcing, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal (i.e. the use of OPRAS) and remuneration should be considered in order to increase effectiveness, efficiency and employee's morale at work.

In line with the above recommendations, more researches need to be conducted in other Public Services delivery sectors like the Training Institutions, Health and Education in order to find out the gaps between the theory and practices. The

researches will find out other influencing factors on HRM. The studies would recommend the solutions to the influencing factors and hence improve the delivery of services.

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