Human Resource Value Creating Practices and Operational Performance in Uganda's Public Sector

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This paper examines the application of human resource (HR) value creating practices and their effect on operational performance in the public sector, with reference to Uganda. Performance remains a challenge in developing countries like Uganda. Moreover, the capability of HR practices to deliver value is little examined. This paper is premised on HR value proposition model and the goal-setting theory to examine HR value creating practices of people, performance, information and work, in view of operational performance in Uganda's public sector. Using traditional narrative literature review, it is established that HR value creating practices are minimally applied in the public sector of Uganda. Transformative people-management approaches are required by putting stakeholders especially employees, in line of sight if HR practices are to create value and foster operational performance. The paper contributes to the knowledge and application of HR value practices and their effect on operational performance in the public sector. The HR practices in the public sector can through strategic flexibility and transformation be adapted to improve performance.

Keywords: human resource management, human resource practices, human resource value creation, value proposition, operational performance, performance management, public sector

INTRODUCTION

Operational performance remains a key concern in the public sector (Becker *et al*., 2001; Meijerink *et al*., 2013), especially in low income countries (Ahenkan *et al*., 2018; Boudreau, 2010). Whereas there have

been management reforms including performance management (Ndanyi, 2019; Radnor & McGuire, 2004), the intangible nature of public services and their broad effect on several stakeholders including politicians, technocrats, employees and the general public complicate their operations (Lindstrom & Vanhala, 2011). A number of studies continue to report low productivity, inefficiency, and low people-orientation in the public sector of different developing countries (Ahenkan *et al*., 2018; Saraswati, 2019; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). In Uganda for example, Ndanyi (2019) reports that challenges facing performance management include absence of performance monitoring (50%), inability to use the appraisal tool by some appraisers (20%), late performance planning (16%), and failure to utilize performance reports (14%). Amidst such performance-related challenges, Kazlauskaite and Buciuniene (2008) advocate for pragmatic approaches in strategic acquisition, deployment, development and retention of human resources (HRs). The complexity in the nature of public sector services evidenced in the various forms of stakeholders - both internal and external (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022), therefore, does not only demand capable people, but also, distinctive HR practices that can create and deliver value.

However, the traditional nature of HR practices in the public sector continues to be questioned (Lindstrom & Vanhala, 2011) for lack of potential to meet stakeholder needs, thereby creating value and achieving operational performance (Dong *et al*., 2016; Fryer *et al*., 2009). Therefore, value creation is increasingly gaining attention among academics and practitioners as one of the important ways through which operational challenges in the public sector can be addressed through stakeholder assessment of services (Meijerink *et al*., 2013). Whereas it aims at adoption of HR practices that contribute to meeting the needs of stakeholders especially clients and employees (Beattie & Smith, 2010; Meijerink, *et al*., 2013), HR value creation is little emphasized in developing countries such as Uganda, and in the public sector in particular. Moreover, Nabaho and Kiiza (2013) argue that appointments in Uganda's public sector including local governments do not objectively assess candidates for their ability to do the job. They contend that posts are reserved for certain candidates, and "the appointment process may be arbitrary, secretive and unchallengeable" (Nabaho & Kiiza, 2013 p. 4). We argue differently that to a considerable extent, Uganda's public sector has improved its HR practices including hiring, training and performance management to become transparent and with mechanisms such as the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Inspectorate of Government (IG) through which aggrieved parties can challenge any decisions (Kakumba & Fourie, 2008, Uganda, 2005). However, insurmountable challenges still exist with regard to irregular recruitment and performance appraisals, abuse of office and existence of ghost employees (Kakumba & Fourie, 2008). Such challenges pose gaps in the extent of transformation of HR practices especially towards improving performance and meeting stakeholder needs through value creation.

The aim of this paper is to examine the extent of application of the different HR value creating practices and their potential contribution to operational performance in the public sector of a developing country; Uganda. This way, we specifically examine the supposedly four major HR value-creating practices of people flow, performance, information, and work flow, in relation to their relative application and the extent to which each creates value and contributes to operational performance.

The paper makes important contributions to HRM in the following ways. *First*, unlike other studies that have considered traditional HR practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, appraisal, compensation, and health and safety (Iqbal *et al*., 2011; Meijerink *et al*., 2013; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2018), this paper focuses on HR value creating practices of people, performance, information, and work, advanced by the HR value proposition model (Aughton, 2005; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). These four major practices are importantly unique and holistically embody ingredients crucial to addressing stakeholder needs. Whereas the epitome of the public sector is service to the public (Uganda, 1995), little attention has been paid to employees as stakeholders who should evaluate the value contribution of the undertaken practices (De Vos & Meganck, 2008). Therefore, the paper assesses the extent to which such practices are applied while emphasizing transformative thinking in a unique public sector-setting geared towards employee appreciation of such practices, which should in turn spur effective operational performance for goal achievement. *Second*, operational performance has been little examined in the public sector (Lindstrome & Vanhala, 2011; Truss, 2009), with most studies particularly focusing on quantifiable outputs, profits, and cost of production in private firms (Brown, 2004; Gupta *et al*., 2013; Knies

et al., 2018). Noteworthy, the public sector is a major employer in Uganda, for example, hence requiring scrutiny of its practices. Whereas HR value creation advocates for both tangible and intangible deliverables (Becker *et al*., 2001), this study makes a strong case for assessing each practice and its contribution to operational performance in a sector dominated by intangibles. Concurrently, we further examine the HR practices within the framework of goal setting theory to provide an understanding of how such practices contribute to operational performance.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

While most research on performance has focused on private-sector businesses with emphasis on productivity and financial performance measured through quantifiable output and profits (Brown, 2004; Deng *et al*., 2016; Gupta *et al*., 2013; Klindzic & Galetic, 2020; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005), the public sector is unique. By definition, the public sector is part of an economy that is run and funded by government, to provide crucial services e.g., healthcare, education, and infrastructure to its citizenry (Knies *et al*., 2018). Whereas Lwamafa (2008) explains the public sector in Uganda to mean the totality of organizations as the executive arm of government whose employees are non-military and non-elective, Article 175 of the Constitution of Uganda (1995) defines it as 'any civil capacity of the government the emoluments for which are payable directly from the consolidated fund or directly out of monies provided by Parliament' (Uganda, 1995). The term public sector as applied in Uganda, generally refers to the entirety of government entities. However, in public service employment terms, it includes only people working in civil capacity excluding the armed forces and politicians because of the unique nature of their terms of service, structure, policies and operations. For the purpose of this paper, we restrict our consideration to government entities and employees working in civil and non-armed or political capacity, to provide civil services to the general public, with funding from the Consolidated Fund as appropriated by the Parliament. They are categorized as Central Government Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Local Governments (MDAs & LGs).

Most public-sector organizations in developing economies (such as Uganda) have over time faced performance challenges including inefficiency, poor time-management, and poor service delivery. As a result, they have embraced wide-ranging reforms including structural and administrative reforms such as decentralization and down-sizing in order to improve their performance (Radnor & McGuire, 2004; Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013). At the epitome, there has been introduction of new public-sector management (NPM) (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020), repositioning the public sector to operate on business-oriented practices that emphasize productivity, quality, efficiency and people-orientation (Dang *et al*., 2018; Klindzic & Galetic, 2020; Truss, 2009). NPM in some parts of Africa (and in Uganda in particular) has further been introduced in response to perceived need to reduce government expenditure, provide more efficient services and decrease wastage of government resources (Polidano, 1999). Brown (2004) argues that some of the key elements of NPM include "managing for results, performance measurement, corporate planning, user pays, devolution of authority, decentralization of activities and risk management" (p. 306). Despite these advances, Uganda's public sector organizations, similar to many developing economies, continue to face performance challenges including unclear and unrealized targets, unsatisfactory service delivery, and lack of urgency (Ndanyi, 2019; de Waal & Counet, 2009), questioning the essence of their management practices.

Therefore, just like within the general framework that challenges public sectors to rethink and transform their HR practices to ensure that they add and deliver value to stakeholders (Aughton, 2005; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005), Uganda still lags behind (Ndanyi, 2019). The general public sector-implemented reforms have merely ushered in a paradigm shift from traditional public administrative approaches to "new public sector management" without creating much value (O'Flynn, 2007; Cinar *et al*., 2021; Cwiklicki, 2016). Consequently, because of such increasing challenges for the public sector amidst the unique nature of its services and the quest for stakeholder satisfaction, it is prudent to turn to HR practices therein, especially with regard to value creation and enhancement of operational performance (Paauwe, 2009; Saraswati, 2019) towards goal attainment.

OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Performance as a concept has been used broadly to refer to organizational, individual, team or a unit's qualitative and quantitative results of work. For example, Ulrich *et al*. (2008, p.5) consider performance to generally mean "ensuring accountability through managing performance from individuals, teams, and organization." Saraswati (2009) defines employee performance as an employee's contribution to the accomplishment of an organization's goals. Many authors have largely focused on quantifiable aspects of performance (Iqbal *et al*., 2011) with minimal attention paid to operational performance (Pauuwe, 2009). Operational performance is mainly concerned with the reliability, timeliness, quality and effectiveness of the outcomes of an organization's processes, which in turn impact performance measures such as customer/client satisfaction (Azim *et al*., 2015). Mbugua and Namada (2019) noted that operational performance seeks to assess management efficiency and reduce management costs. Indeed, just like other firm measurement indicators, Uraon and Gupta (2019) argued that operational performance indicators "differ across organizations depending on their areas of operations" (p. 89). For instance, MacDuffie (1995) used productivity and quality to measure operational performance while Uraon and Gupta (2019) used quality of product/service, new product development and customer satisfaction. This suggests that by operational performance, reference is made to several tangible and intangible firm outcomes including quality of service, customer satisfaction, timeliness, productivity, organizational efficiency, among others. Moreover, the public sector's focus on both tangible (visible and rigorously quantifiable) and intangible (invisible and difficult to quantify) deliverables (Aughton, 2005; Becker *et al*., 2001) has re-oriented the focus of performance beyond only quantifiable results to also include qualitative attributes.

While the public sector generally has made strides towards developing and managing performance (Brown, 2004; Radnor & McGuire, 2004), this has been in piecemeal and disjointed, without substantially recognizable improvement (Abdul-Kahar, 2020). Such efforts have included application of private management techniques and flexible structures and processes in the public sector (Cinar *et al*., 2021), decentralization with little emphasis on rules (Brown, 2004; Fryer *et al*., 2009), and use of performance contracts (Ndanyi, 2019). However, performance contracts for example, have only moderately (50%) demanded employees to deliver, have been little appreciated for improving performance (30%), and little supported to lead to client satisfaction (14%, Ndanyi, 2019). Moreover, overall performance management is reported to lack a clear plan (Murphy, 2020; de Waal & Counet, 2009). In this regard, knowledge of improving operational performance through effectiveness, quality, efficiency and timeliness in services to stakeholders remains crucial, particularly focusing on goal achievement (Latham *et al*., 2008) through value creating HR practices for stakeholder satisfaction.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Goal Setting Theory

Goal setting theory was propounded by Edwin Locke in 1968, and it postulates that an individual's conscious goals and intentions are the primary determinants of behavior (Gibson *et al*., 2012). This implies that the goals established by employees remain important in motivating them for greater performance (Latham *et al*., 2008) through continued pursuance of such goals. Goal setting remains important in public sector management (Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013) by motivating employee performance through goal achievement, and hence supports any desired modification of employee behaviors (Salaman *et al*, 2005).

However, effective goal setting process embodies certain crucial attributes including goal specificity, goal difficulty, goal intensity, and goal commitment (Gibson *et al*., 2012), which are all dependent on effectiveness of people-management practices (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). For instance, the quality of employees, their development, information sharing, and performance approaches determine the quality of goals. Quite often, the public sector is decried for setting unclear and unachievable goals, losing focus, and also getting defeated by challenging goals (Truss, 2009; de Waal & Counet, 2009). Therefore, the epitome of public sector performance will largely depend on the clarity, specificity, and achievability of the set goals, to which employees should be committed by having appropriate HR practices that engender

stakeholder satisfaction as espoused by value proposition. This way, setting goals that meet the interests of stakeholders, and pursuing such goals by employing people practices that are appreciated through HR value position should create a difference in performance.

HR Value Proposition Model

Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) developed an HR value proposition model with five elements constituting an integrated HR blueprint. The five elements are: external realities, stakeholders, HR practices, HR resources, and HR professionals. Each of the five elements is connected to the other. According to Ulrich and Brochbank (2005), *first*, both external realities and stakeholder interests determine the importance of HR to an organization, and hence the need to focus on what it delivers as opposed to what it does (Aughton, 2005). *Second*, the remaining elements i.e., HR practices, HR resources, and HR professionals encompass the HR function of an organization.

While each of the five elements contributes to the criteria for HR value, the HR practices of people flow, performance management, information flow, and work flow (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Aughton, 2005) are of particular importance to this paper. Unlike the traditional HR practices dominant in the public sector in general (Iqbal *et al*., 2011), the new HR blue print emphasizes a shift towards designing a compendium of HR practices (Aughton, 2005) that add and deliver value to different stakeholders including tax payers, line managers, employees, customers/clients, politicians and the general public (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Fryer *et al*., 2009). However, *first*, the configuration of HR practices in Uganda's public service is systems— and process-oriented including routinised practices such as hiring, training and development, performance appraisal, and benefits and compensation management, hence posing a disconnect with the outlined strategically-focused value creating HR practices. *Second*, mixed arguments exist as to whether sustained value or competitive advantage lies in human resources or HR practices *per se* (Kazlauskaite & Buciuniene, 2008). Appreciating the importance of HR practices in relation to human resources, HR value creating practices in the public sector within the HR value proposition model reveals their extent of linkage to operational performance and hence goal attainment. They should be cognizant of the unique general functioning and meet interests of several stakeholders including the general public, clients, politicians, technocrats and employees.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on traditional narrative literature review (Baumeister, 2013) on the key topical areas of HR value practices and operational performance. This approach provides a qualitative analysis of a number of non-systematically selected studies. While aware of the differences between systematic and narrative review procedures (Tranfield *et al.,* 2003; Wanyama *et al*., 2021), in order to generate considerably adequate and relevant literature, this narrative literature review to a considerable degree conducted broad searches. *Firstly*, we conducted preliminary general readings of a few hardcopy text books and electronic articles on the subject of HR practices, value creation and performance, in prior possession by the researchers. *Secondly*, we conveniently and flexibly conducted database searches (Tranfield *et al.,* 2003; Denyer & Neely 2004; Green *et al.,* 2006), particularly Emerald and Google Scholar that were easily accessed by the researchers. A combination of search terms such as operational performance, Human resource practices, HR practices, Human resource value creation, HR value creation, public sector, and public service were interchangeably and flexibly used. *Thirdly*, other colleague researchers were contacted for some relevant articles. Overall, 56 readings were considered basing on their relevancy to the key thematic areas of the study.

VALUE CREATING HR PRACTICES

Transformation of HR practices has been touted (Brown, 2004; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015) for revitalizing performance by ensuring effective delivery of tangibles and intangibles to different stakeholders including employers, employees, politicians and the public (Aughton, 2005). Subsequently, HR value-creating

practices of people, performance, information, and work, are important towards adding and delivering value to different stakeholders in the public sector (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005), thereby enhancing operational performance through achievement of set goals. Each practice is examined below.

Flow of People

This HR transformative criterion focuses on revitalizing or adapting the HR practices dealing with the movement of people as key assets, into, laterally, vertically and out of an organization. It deals with talent management for the accomplishment of an organization's goals and strategy (Foster, 2004) since organizations with better talent become more successful than those with less (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). As a matter of emphasis, talent comes from people flow into an organization; through their entry process, skills development, and movement within and out. This therefore not only focuses on an organization's ability to attract, identify, obtain and retain the most competitive, but also to identify and weed out the nonessential and unwanted human resources (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Uganda's public sector employment while emphasizing meritocracy, also outlines competencies and performance. However, objectivity and fairness with regard to people practices has been questioned (Nabaho & Kiiza, 2013); pointing to political patronage and sectarian tendencies that tilt the practices.

The benefit of people practices to stakeholders in the public sector in particular lies in their capability to reveal employees' potential and letting them understand through hiring, development and promotions that they are the right people. Uganda's public sector has demonstrated ability to competitively attract, screen and hire the right people for example using the Public Service Commission (PSC), Health Service Commission (HSC), Education Service Commission (ESC) and District Service Commission (DSC) (Uganda, 1995; 1997); and to train staff in relevant areas through the Civil Service College and departmental organized seminars and workshops. However, the ability to fully translate such practices into improved performance by demonstrating abilities and capabilities to deliver the public-interest strategy remains a challenge especially for lack of alignment with stakeholder needs. An examination of the effectiveness of people flow practice in Uganda's public sector reveals;

Acquisition of Human Resources

The public sector is required to be frugal in staffing by bringing in competent and competitive people with knowledge, skills and abilities to develop organizational capabilities towards meeting her strategy (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). It should therefore attract a pool of candidates, hire the best or most suited candidates, and orient them to both the work and public sector ethos. Whereas this is a good practice, challenges of nepotism and stringent rules in the public sector (Brown, 2004; Knies *et al*., 2018), particularly in developing economies such as Uganda, reportedly undermine meritocracy, fairness and flexibility ideals.

Firstly, Uganda's public sector usually develops a pool of high-quality candidates across the general public (external recruitment) and also within itself (internal recruitment; Nabaho & Kiiza, 2013). However, some public entities such as districts face challenges of attracting human resources to remote areas (Kakumba & Fennell, 2014), yet it is the ability to attract a pool of candidates that improves chances of obtaining the required employees (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). In addition, the public sector hardly uses previously accumulated pools because every recruitment is managed afresh. Potential candidates are usually targeted through newspapers and institutional noticeboards while ignoring other media such as radio, television, and job fares (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Moreover, Apprenticeships or placements and agencies and consulting firms in restructuring and downsizing are not listed sources of job candidates (Abdul-Kahar, 2020).

Secondly, the right candidates are required to be sieved out of a pool by taking right decisions (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005), especially by recruitment bodies e.g., Public Service Commission (PSC), that should choose the most suited candidate based on merit. Whereas the process usually involves technical persons in higher positions (Uganda, 1997), who interview and score and also participate in making the final selection, feedback after the interview usually delays, coming out on average a month after the process (Karanja *et al*., 2015).

Thirdly, financial assistance for new hires through a host of staff benefits such as sign-up bonuses, relocation support, and children education loans; are hardly available because of budgetary constraints particularly in the mainstream civil service unlike in the private sector and other government authorities. However, the public sector offers some enticing opportunities including international assignments, attractive postings and projects, candidate's fit with the team, attendance to personal issues such as quality of life, and interpersonal relationships between the candidates, managers and colleagues (Lwamafa, 2008); which are critically important.

Fourthly, orientation of new employees is important in enabling them adapt to work and the organization, and also bring them to speed and performance (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Whereas this has been in most cases a formality to address administrative requirements such as completing official forms, issuance of identity cards, and access to office and other facilities; it is little used for early-short-term performance planning and feedback including assigning new hires to quickly accomplishable tasks for a quick start. The initial performance evaluation is usually done to meet requirements for confirmation in a job, followed by evaluation towards promotion, other than being regular (Kakumba & Fennell, 2014; Uganda, 2021). Furthermore, orientation hardly covers the entire value chain as only a few managerial cadres are targeted. Clients, suppliers, assimilation to the team and listening to new employees' insights are rarely considered.

Talent Development

This involves training and development of human capital to unleash their talent. Whereas *Training* should specifically include determining those to attend the programme, facilitators, and programme design and management (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005); its coverage (Yahiaoui *et al.*, 2015), delivery, and measurement of its impact on the participants (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; de Waal & Counet, 2009) remain unsatisfactory. Quite often, training in most public-sector organizations is merely routinely undertaken as a formality to meet budgetary and accountability requirements instead of addressing specific skills and behavioral gaps for value creation (Beattie & Smith, 2010). This is more common in Local Governments where capacity building is a required component of development planning (Uganda, 1997).

Nurturing employee competencies through opportunities to learn from experience using for example job-rotation, mentoring and coaching, outside experience, personal development plan and temporary assignments (Kazlauskaite & Buciuniene, 2008) remain limited. New assignments, sponsored international postings, functional rotations, community services, sabbaticals, and fellowships develop new ideas and perspectives, leadership skills, and networks (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Paradoxically, these practices are little supported by public-sector structures, policies, resources and management (Abdul-Kahar, 2020; Ahenkan *et al.*, 2018). In addition, personal development plans are given limited attention by both employees and managers. For example, attendance of conferences is hindered by limited resources and selective recommendations as mainly a few top executives preferably participate.

Out-sourcing

Organizations generally, sometimes contract human capital because they cannot own all the talent they require. For example, Ulrich and Brochbank (2005) advise organizations to hire some employees not fully utilized elsewhere, through joint alliances, site visits, retention of consultants, outsourcing, and maintaining relationships with former employees. However, the rigid public-sector policy frameworks limit open application of such flexible work arrangements, although the practice has been effective in contracting some key staff in a few technical positions including Permanent Secretaries, Directors and other critical positions. Public-sector organizations, however, lack and therefore need to develop frameworks of relationships with former employees and professional bodies generally so as to provide an enduring source of talent for unique assignments (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005).

Restructuring

In a highly competitive environment nowadays, organizations including the public service should operate with the right size of workforce required to handle immediate and short-term needs (Ulrich &

Brochbank, 2005). Therefore, *firstly*, the public sector including national and local governments particularly in Uganda, are creating flexible structures and processes for effectiveness (Brown, 2004; Brunetto & Beattie, 2020; Kakumba & Fennell, 2014). *Secondly*, involuntary downsizing has been applied where the costs for labour must be reduced. *Thirdly*, public sector organizations are ensuring they have the right kind of people with knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation to pursue set goals (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2003; Nabaho & Kiiza, 2013). However, lack of transparency and the required perks (Ahenkan *et al*., 2018; Radnor & McGuire, 2004) has challenged the required flexibilities, efficiency and results.

Binding/Retention

Talent retention of all level employees is crucial, and it requires establishing the reason as to why some talented people leave while others stay (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; De Vos & Meganch, 2008). However, the public service especially in developing economies such as Uganda, experiences challenges of obtaining and providing accurate data and information (Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013; de Waal & Counet, 2009) on prevailing conditions and reasons for employee departure or actual stay. In addition, although intrinsic and extrinsic incentives are supported while appreciating that use of money for employee retention and motivation towards performance is detestable, schemes such as bonuses (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) are hardly applicable, at least in the public service of Uganda, and also, unsustainable. Public servants in Uganda generally earn a consolidated pay which rarely meets the minimum standard of living (Ruzaaza *et al*., 2020). Furthermore, there are limited high-value challenging tasks, development opportunities, family support, and flexi-working arrangements among other non-financial benefits as recommended (Fryer *et al*., 2009; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Subsequently, most employees in Uganda's public sector put in little effort as they look elsewhere for additional income (Lwamafa, 2008). However, the stable permanent and pensionable employment terms (Kwatampora et al., 2022) are largely the main contributor to talent attraction and retention.

Promotion

Promotion of employees by elevating them to higher positions in an organization is important in communicating to all stakeholders the importance of such human talent, and recognizing their behaviours and contribution (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). The challenge, however, remains in the generally inadequate vacancies and unclearly established job criteria and requirements upon which candidates' potential ought to be evaluated and new and existing jobholders get supported within Uganda's public service. Likewise, it is not clear how job criteria translate strategy into job specific expected deliverables and acceptable standards upon which candidates are assessed (Boudreau, 2010). Open and detailed discussion of critical areas of performance in order to build employee confidence, and identification and support to those that are ready for promotion (Murphy, 2020), are rarely considered. Besides, employee promotions in Uganda's public sector are not realistically based on capacity to grow into the job and the willingness to learn and take on new challenges, but on seniority, experience, performance at promotional interviews (Uganda, 2021) and to some degree, social networks as demonstrated by the notion of 'sons of the soil' (Kakumba & Fennell, 2014), particularly common in local governments.

Flow of Performance

Performance links people to work by setting work standards and measures, financial and nonfinancial rewards, and providing feedback in respect of all stakeholder interests (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). It is meant to hold employees accountable for their work (Foster, 2010; Knies *et al*., 2018), recognize those who meet standards while those who fail are sanctioned (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). This provides managers and employees with a clear line of sight between expected behaviours, rewards, and motivation towards optimal service (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, setting clearly defined standards of achievement against expected measurable results and linking these to desired rewards in order to win desired behaviours has not been achieved in some regards (Murphy, 2020). Therefore, attention in Uganda's public sector should be placed on setting performance standards, offering rewards, and follow up as discussed below.

Setting Standards

According to Ulrich and Brochbank (2005), this is mainly a three-stage process that includes deciding what to measure, building systems for measurement, and appraising employee performance. First*, measurement of the right thing* rather than what can be easily measured, should be embedded in performance measurement process. Whereas public sector organizations undertake appraisals, they are simply ritualized/ undertaken as a tradition, and nonstrategic. Therefore, effective performance management requires aligning standards and measures to strategy in order to clarify the line of sight between business strategy and personal expectations (Brown, 2004; Fryer et al., 2009). Besides, balancing behavior, output standards and measures for individuals and teams for jobs inclined towards individual and team outcomes respectively is important, yet rarely practiced in public organizations in Uganda. In addition, prioritizing measures using balance scorecards to address only standards and measures important to each stakeholder is little implemented, yet emphasized in literature (Radnor & McGuire, 2004; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Furthermore, a gap is evident in Uganda's public sector with regard to identifying lead indicators when selecting standards and measures; set targets are not demanding to challenge employees to perform at higher levels and, measurement does not mainly focus on what can be controlled e.g., employee daily action such as records-per-day for a data entrant (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). It is evident that some of these choices are difficult to meet (Murphy, 2020; de Waal & Counet, 2009) and are generally minimally considered in the public sector (Ahenkan et al., 2018). Balance scorecard is for example recommended in defining standards related to all stakeholders (Becker et al., 2001), but it has been little applied in only a few public sector organizations such as Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).

Second, *building measurement systems* is considered important in the process of setting and monitoring performance standards and how well they are used (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2004). The challenge, however, remains the implementation of its choices including determining those who set and track standards, the positive and negative consequences of tracking standards and measures, the means of tracking results to provide feedback and influence performance, and the frequency of formal feedback in addition to ongoing performance feedback (Murphy, 2020). In Uganda's public sector, the setting of measurement standards is largely not always vigorously considered by both the managers and the employees, and also, monitoring and feedback are rarely meaningfully prioritized (Kizito, 2016), but mainly done to meet specific needs like promotions.

Third, effective *appraisal systems* should be built to bring together standards and measures for performance appraisal process (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Although it should aim at helping employees understand their jobs, learn through feedback on their level of job performance and appreciate management's concern for both results and quality of life; adherence to all these is low (Murphy, 2020; Ruzaaza et al., 2013). In the public sector, there is limited alignment of performance standards and measures with the overall goal (Foster, 2010; Fryer et al., 2009). Consequently, employees should be supported to understand the fit between their personal work and that of their units, and the overall strategy of a public sector organization and individual unit performance (Radnor & McGuire, 2004; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005).

Financial Rewards

Financial rewards are relevant in meeting people's needs, improving their social status, and providing a feeling of personal worth and self-esteem (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). An effective financial reward strategy should therefore be linked to individual and team performance (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). However, financial constraints especially in most public sector organizations limit implementation of financial rewards (Ahenkan et al. 2018; Gupta et al., 2013). *Short-term cash* including base pay or on-the-spot cash compensation or allowances in the public sector of Uganda are rarely tagged on performance and are not equitable both internally and externally (Ndanyi 2019). Moreover, there are big discrepancies in salaries across cadres such as top executives and directors vis-à-vis their technical and operational staff, and organizations including Authorities such as KCCA vis-à-vis the mainstream ministries and local governments. To attain employee satisfaction and achieve operational performance, such discrepancies should be addressed by offering competitive and equitable rewards.

Non-Financial Rewards

Non-financial rewards such as housing, education and medical support among others generally strongly complement financial rewards and drive performance especially when they are tagged on met performance standards (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, most, if provided, are usually given to employees regardless of their levels of performance, but as mere entitlements. For example, some non-financial benefits such as time off, medical care, sick leave, retirement plans, transport facilitation (Uganda, 2006) among others are merely taken as entitlements expected by employees, instead of being earned for meeting standards. Consequently, they lack the wherewithal to influence employee attitudes and operational performance.

In addition, the extent to which employees are encouraged to take responsibility for decision-making, making suggestions for improvement, and being trusted to represent the organization both within and to the outside world is crucial. However, it is revealed that management at times vetoes employee decisions although others are reportedly risk-averse (Wanyama, 2017). Similarly, the public service rules and procedures do not favour free participation in community work and experimentation through flexibility on the job (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Knies et al., 2015; Brown, 2004). Only a few public agencies and authorities such as National Water, and KCCA, unlike mainstream ministries and local governments, have engaged in community events, with most public sector organizations seemingly delinked from community concerns. This potentially negatively affects stakeholder perceived satisfaction.

Follow-Up

Although most organizations approach feedback as a one-off event at appraisal stage (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2003), it ought to include continuous informal conversations differently from formal appraisal procedures, providing information on progress, and allowing people to draw their own conclusions on the basis of available information (Murphy, 2020; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Unfortunately, public sector employees just like other sector employees in developing economies are not strongly empowered. They quite often simply get instructions on *what* should be done instead of explanations of *why* certain things should happen; and also, there is inadequate follow up by the supervisors (Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013; Radnor & McGuire, 2004). To this end, employees are denied the understanding of the reason for doing something, hence failing to challenge their own thinking as they rather get fixed to what should be done as defined by management. Additionally, employee follow-up should be part of performance appraisal by every team leader or supervisor so as to achieve operational performance.

Information Flow

Information flow within the HR value proposition model (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) is critical for creating awareness about an organization and stakeholders, sharing goals, strategy development, decision-making, managing behaviours, innovation, change management, control, and management of service and quality (Foster, 2010; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). Considering *communication strategy* and *information transmission* as the main choices for this practice, focused and receptive mindset within the public sector is very vital. This can particularly be achieved through exemplary and diversity-oriented leadership, and with reality-based way of thinking that challenges the dominant view of the public sector (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, the public sector in Uganda is diverse in composition, but with sectarian tendencies (Kakumba & Fennell, 2014; Nabaho & Kiiza, 2013) that hinder effective communication and leadership for value creation.

Communication Strategy

To create value and ensure operational performance as supported by a set of goals, a comprehensive communication strategy with the intent of meeting the needs of each stakeholder is imperative (Radnor & McGuire, 2004). Therefore, managers are encouraged to have a clear purpose that is linked to the overall leadership philosophy e.g., involving and empowering employees through sharing information on different stakeholders and activities (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, the effectiveness of the strategy largely depends on the consistency between the message and the reality, and

the ease with which developed common concepts, language and logic can be understood. Whereas communication in the public sector is largely conducted within established policy guidelines to ensure consistency (Brown, 2004), the messages are largely blurred in bureaucratic procedures (Ahenkan *et al*., 2018; Knies *et al*., 2018; Truss, 2009). For example, all office communication in the public sector of Uganda is mainly vested in the Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executive Officers. In addition, senior leaders at times censor messages (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) while some clients or employees especially those in upcountry areas and those with little income have limited access to commonly used media including internet, newspapers and televisions. Employee empowerment and strategies for effective information sharing with stakeholders in line with set goals should be developed and devolved to drive positive operational performance.

Information Transmission

Information in organizations is relayed in different directions: outside-inside, inside-outside the organization, top-down, bottom-up and, lateral communication. The direction of information flow is, however, linked to the communication cycle (e.g., the sender, the receiver, the message, the media, and the timing) with the choices differing for customers, employees, managers and investors/ politicians (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). However, each information flow direction has implications for performance.

Outside-in flow of information importantly informs an organization through interviews and discussions, research on clients, data on related service providers and government, and previous performance (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, public sector organizations in Uganda in particular rarely rely on interview information to understand external realities other than focusing on candidate screening for the job (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2003). On the other hand, *Inside-out* information is useful for creating a brand of services and communicating it. This can be achieved through organizational processes (Cinar *et al*., 2021) including quality assurance, hiring, training, effective appraisal and rewards, competent leadership, and creating trustable emotional ties with clients (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). The above strategies have, however, remained conventional in the public service with limited value creation.

Top-down information flow presents top management's tone to lower level employees (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Examples include immediate supervisors communicating the required actions, balancing between the message and the underlying reason (*the what* and *the why*), sharing the responsibilities and performance with its consequences, being honest by sharing both good and bad news, and applying multimedia e.g., face-to-face meetings, team briefings, two-way videos, and interactive sessions. This is the most prevalent communication in the public sector generally and in Uganda because of its hierarchical structure (Brown, 2004), yet it stifles empowerment and ideas (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015).

Bottom-up information flow is hierarchical, thereby helping management to receive feedback, appreciate the work of technical people, and building a database of employee views (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015). However, its effectiveness is affected by the hierarchical command structures and limited top-management participation in employee activities such as meetings. In addition, the seniority emphasis in the public sector of Uganda limits free and open sharing in a bottom-up approach. *Lateral* or *side-to-side* information flow on the other hand involves people at the same level without necessarily adhering to seniority status largely prevalent in public sector organizations. Although it is good for interaction and information sharing among staff at the same level (Delery & Roumpi, 2017), it is facilitated by incentives such as harmony among peers, and the will to share information without selfish intention by a few wishing to become better performers (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). However, the complexity and diverse nature of the public sector workforce in Uganda, and above all, the emphasis on hierarchical structures, seniority and rules and procedures hinder free interaction that is value adding to employees, thereby affecting operational performance. The hierarchical structural relationships and rigid rules and procedures require relaxation.

Work Flow

Transforming ideas and other inputs into products and services so as to achieve organizational purpose is crucial. This practice adds value to all stakeholders, most especially employees who should be able to understand their roles and meet their expectations by aiming at high value-added work with accountable results. Subsequently, work flow practices aim to address three key choices: work accountability (who), work processes (how), and the physical work environment (where) in order to deliver value (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) and improve operational performance.

Accountability

This emphasizes those *who do the work,* and it is defined by the structure which should be aligned to the organization's strategy (Foster, 2010). It mainly considers corporate portfolio, differentiation, integration, and configuration for better understanding of those responsible for work (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005).

Firstly, corporate portfolio enables organizations to develop their missions and the relationships among other business units, with the resulting strategy depending on industry, clients, competitors, technology, product/service, and culture. These strategy choices determine one of four portfolio structures: a single business (product or service in the case of a public sector), related diversification (similar business with common products or services), unrelated diversification (differences across business units), or a holding organization (managing businesses dealing differently, but with oversight functions (see Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) as is the case with the ministry of public service's responsibility over public service employees. Although some choices e.g., competitors are common in the private sector, the public sector has been challenged to operate on business principles (Fryer *et al*., 2009; Radnor & McGuire, 2004) and hence, central government ministries focus on a particular *industry* (e.g. health), *service* (e.g. healthcare), *customers* (e.g. the public), and with a *culture* unique to an industry (Gupta *et al*., 2013). Also, some ministries e.g., those of Finance, Public Service and, Local Government, provide oversight and coordination roles similar to a holding company.

Secondly, differentiation has facilitated organizations to structure around products/services, clientele or public, function, technology, geography or a combination (matrix) for value creation (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). While organizations have variably used different combinations to achieve their objectives, public sector organizations including those in Uganda are largely employing structures combining functions, services, and geography.

Thirdly, organizations have focused on integration by bringing together work through encouraging unity and cooperation in services from different operational lines of the same organization. This has facilitated local responsiveness and national integration (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). The Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), and the Integrated Personnel and Payroll System (IPPS, now switching to Human Capital Information System) are examples in Uganda's public sector. These have been achieved through hierarchical supervision, meetings, and well-established common rules and roles at both local and national levels. These have facilitated training, information sharing and horizontal coordination among staff of HR, Finance, Accounting, and Audit, but appraisal and reward systems remain delinked from collective performance and cooperation.

Fourthly, work configuration through organizational hierarchy, span of control, and authority for positions is common in the public sector (Brown, 2004). The public sector reforms are oriented towards a broader span of control (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015) as alluded to for customer focus, shared goals, information sharing and inspiring employees as opposed to narrow and hierarchical layers (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Continuous education and training as well as advancement in technology and reduction in emphasis on rules and monitoring are vital for realization of these ingredients in Uganda's public sector.

Work Process

The choice of *how work is done* is mainly important and achieved through three aspects: human interaction patterns, focused governance, and customization (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). *Human interaction patterns* i.e., the actual people involved in work and how they actually function is defined by

the environment, and this varies with sector and nature of work. Whereas some work requires limited individual work-related interaction, others require interactive teams. This therefore calls for choices on individual service (little or no interaction), sequential service involving a conveyor arrangement, interactive teams with emphasis on teamwork, and sequential teams which merge conveyor service with teamwork. Virtual teams have been limited, but are currently gaining attention in the wake of the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic, whereby home-working through Zoom and other virtual means have been adopted as official work methods in the public service.

Focused governance through vertical and horizontal organization is increasingly becoming embedded in the public service. While hierarchical structures emphasize vertical organization, they also establish functional or departmental linkages. However, little attention has been given to levels that provide client information (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Horizontal organization on the other hand focuses on individuals and processes, and the interactions among them rather than functional hierarchies. Whereas this is important for client inputs and organizational strategic fit (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005), it is perceived to undermine authoritative command inherent in Uganda's public sector structures and processes.

Lastly, *customization* is key for standardization of processes. While this is largely perceived to apply to the private sector, standardized processes are important in speeding the fulfilment of uniform services such as quality and efficient payroll management (Radnor & McGuire, 2004). The public service, for example, is well known for established standard operating procedures and rules that guide work (Brown, 2004) although they lack the required flexibility. Also, customized processes tailor particular services to customer/client-needs e.g., accumulating a pool of candidates for police and payrolls for teachers and pensioners. Such a process has to some extent delivered value and enhanced performance through personalized services and products.

The Physical Space

Focusing on the *where* the work is carried out is also crucial for an organization to create value and improve performance. Ulrich & Brochbank (2005, p.142) argue that 'physical settings may shape culture and increase productivity through facilitating work flow, engaging employees, and sending powerful signals about values, leadership, and status.' For value creation and goal achievement in this regard, organizations in general and the public sector in particular are required to consider three main choices: space, environment, and symbolism.

The *space* takes care of *modularity* (flexibility to quickly reconfigure rooms), *proximity* for closer cooperation and trust for quick information flow, *meeting rooms* with appropriate arrangement, and *customer/client contact* by locating employees where they can easily interact with customers/clients (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). While these are increasingly being considered in the public sector, some officials e.g., top executives and heads of departments still rigidly occupy exclusively expansive enclosed offices while operational staff compact themselves in small offices. Most importantly, the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic has further challenged the efficacy of the old congested office set-up, to one which observes minimal social distance will maintaining interaction and with adequate aeration for health and safety.

The *environment* including *natural lighting and aeration* through windows and glasses, *ambient light* from the ceiling and furniture, *mood and action-evoking colors*, and *personalization of working spaces* (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005) are revered and recommended for health, and to enhance a feeling of belonging and ownership. *Ergonomics* should be addressed through consideration of physical demands of the work by making the seating and working tools suitable for individuals and encouraging movement rather than continuously spending time in one place. However, some office spaces and sitting arrangements remain traditional and hence a health hazard because of their failure to adjust.

Lastly, *symbolism* through physical items to which people attribute meaning are increasingly being allowed in organizations as an expression of employees to customers/clients (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Such symbolism through physical setting creates a lasting impression, expresses someone's style, culture, commitment to people, and status, thereby adding value to employees' work towards goal achievement (Latham *et al*., 2008) and hence influence operational performance. This way, public sector organizations

are challenged to empower employees and allow flexibility for simple personal beautification of office environments.

DISCUSSION

The public sector needs to transform her human resource practices to create and deliver value to stakeholders within the context of the public service. Adoption of transformative private-sector-like approaches for competitiveness and efficiency has been noted, but public sector uniqueness enshrined in ownership, source of funding, clients and control (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015) should be considered for effective tangible and intangible deliverables to different stakeholders. Therefore, instead of relying on evidence from the private sector (Knies *et al*., 2018), research on relevant practices to the public sector is vital. This is supported by Brown's (2004) demand for particular focus of the public sector on public interest outcomes instead of private interests in realizing organizational competitiveness and business outcomes.

Transformative HR value-creating practices should realistically and practically surpass a paradigm shift from traditional to new public management (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020), by approaching work and people with stakeholders and results in mind (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Alignment of organizational goals, overall strategy and human resource strategy is crucial, yet rarely followed (Foster, 2010). This should cascade to teams and individuals within the context of goal-setting theory and HR value proposition model by aligning individual interests to those of the organization as well as stakeholders.

Goal setting is emphasized to adhere to the relevant ideals including goal difficulty, specificity, intensity, and commitment to guide ongoing process of performance of employees and organizations (Radnor & McGuire, 2004; Latham *et al*. 2008). This is expected to win employee effort and motivation to work towards achieving set goals, which will incentivize improved service delivery and operational performance. Management and its leadership should therefore be up to date with providing a clear line of sight for their human resources rather than remain mere administrators without new ideas (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015), which is likely to inhibit goal achievement.

The above is augmented by an integrative system linking performance to value creating HR practices so as to achieve desired outcomes relevant to several stakeholders (Fryer *et al*., 2009). Innovative and value creating HR practices are emphasized as opposed to traditional and administrative focus on recruitment, selection, training and development, compensation and exit. Within the framework of HR value proposition (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005; Aughton, 2005), four broad HR practices including people flow, performance, information flow and work flow have been presented and examined for their applicability in the public sector generally, and in Uganda in particular. While the private-business context considers delivery of tangibles and intangibles to stakeholders including customers, shareholders and employees; the public sector should emphasize politicians and clients instead of shareholders and customers respectively, taxes not profit, and flexibility against bureaucratic tendencies (Knies *et al*., 2018; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). Successively, contextualization (Radnor & McGuire, 2004) through research, strategic alignment, and follow up of such transformative HR practices relevant to public-sector value creation to specific stakeholders' needs is emphasized.

People flow including acquisition, talent development, outsourcing, reorganizing, retention and boosting/promotion seems to take a flexible approach in the private sector unlike in the public sector with strict legal, structural and policy frameworks (Knies *et al*. 2018; Brown, 2004). There is need to flexibly, transparently and competitively manage the process of accumulation of a pool of candidates, and also consider previous pools of applications as well as employing and restructuring/downsizing agencies. Whereas the public sector of Uganda (and particularly the mainstream public service) has undertaken reforms, there is need to transform their structures, systems and approaches to develop capabilities and flexibilities for the different ministries, local governments and authorities as well as staff to deliver to expectations of those they serve. Above all, sieve out the best candidates demonstrating greater job and organizational fit, commitment, and return on investment (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). Such people should be built through training and development. Unlike the routine approach, training should strategically identify those to attend, ensure effective programme design, relevant content, and effective facilitators.

Employees should also be supported to acquire knowledge and experience through external placements, coaching, rotation, sabbaticals, and fellowships, because they are little applied especially in the public sector in Uganda (Abdul-Kahar, 2020). Temporary sourcing through contracting, maintaining contacts with former employees and consultants, and establishing alliances, are rarely applied in the public sector of Uganda, yet they are crucial strategies for achieving optimal numbers at specific periods as organizations do not need to have all the required employees at all times (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). The public sector also needs to invest more in retaining the right kind of people through creation of a bond with promising employees.

Performance management in Uganda's public service has largely focused on annual appraisal reports (Ndanyi, 2019; Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013), yet this should be ongoing, identifying landmarks in an employee's job performance and behaviours (Murphy, 2020). Emphasis should be placed on setting clear standards, aligning and offering rewards based on performance, and continuous follow-up (Ruzaaza *et al*., 2013; Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Uganda's public sector should therefore ensure that there are clear performance standards aligned with overall goals and job particulars. Also, pay should focus on individual and team performance rather than only job categories without recognizing people's effort. Moreover, employees and managers need to continually look out for critical incidents rather than wait for an appointed evaluation usually at the end of the year, which does not fully capture ongoing performance.

The importance of information flow to all stakeholders is emphasized. However, the bureaucratic and hierarchically centralized nature of communication in the public sector impedes generation of ideas and free-flow of information (Ahenkan *et al*., 2018; de Waal & Counet, 2009). For effective information flow for creation of value and performance improvement, there should be all directional information flow: inside-out, outside-inside, top-down, down-top and lateral communication. Such a multi-pronged approach benefits all stakeholders in sharing and receiving information. Importantly, the communication cycle including the sender, the receiver, the message, encoding, the media, decoding and the timing should be relevantly applied to suit all stakeholders' interests.

Lastly, it has been ascertained that improving work flow process actually ensures that other inputs are effectively converted into services to meet set goals for the public sector. *Firstly*, accountability by those who do the work, the structure, and organizational strategy require clear definition and sharing of the mission, structuring around services and functions to have a matrix structure, integration and responsiveness, as well as configuration to allow a wide span of control. Public sector organizations such as KCCA should review their bloated structures that have several top managers including supervisors, managers and directors, considering associated human resource costs. *Secondly*, whereas work process is well documented in the public sector, governance through integrated vertical and horizontal organization allowing human interaction, customization and standardization to meet respective stakeholder needs requires more attention. *Thirdly*, the physical environment in terms of space and its setting, modularity and proximity, ergonomics and symbolism require rethinking if HR practices are to create value and improve operational performance that supports goal achievement (Ulrich & Brochbank, 2005). Office spaces in Uganda's public service need remodeling to become flexible to new workplace needs, create ambience, allow personification with symbolism and improve physical environment to create a more sense of belonging. Moreover, the recent outbreak of corona virus requiring observance of specific standard operating procedures such as social distancing and improved hygiene highlights the need for more attention to safe-working guidelines and practices.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving operational performance in the public sector requires understanding her unique mandate and hence setting clear goals, transforming the structure and HR practices, and ensuring they are aligned to the overall organizational strategy. Whereas competitive private business-oriented practices have been recommended and employed in the public sector for effectiveness and efficiency (Yahiaoui *et al*., 2015), the unique nature of the public sector does not only require adaptation and contextualization of such practices, but most importantly, research into public-sector unique applicable approaches. The structured

hierarchical reporting relationship governed by rules with emphasis on authority, and the differences in the nature of stakeholders including politicians, technocrats, and clients, source of funding and the general public as opposed to shareholders, managers, profits and customers, point to differences between the two sectors, hence requiring unique considerations.

Consequently, the HR value proposition model provides a blue print for transformational HR practices that add value to the benefit of different stakeholders. The unique practices focusing on people, performance, information and work are emphasized. While they have largely been analyzed in the private sector, they can adaptively and uniquely apply to the public sector. The public sector, however, needs to reform and become more flexible in their structures, policies, processes and practices. Good practices involving using a previous pool of applicants and downsizing-organizations for competitive hiring are not existent, yet they are a good source of quality candidates. Hiring bodies should be demanded to choose the best candidates and communicate timely. Performance management should be ongoing to identify milestones of employee performance through set standards, offering rewards and follow up rather than having a one-off appraisal process. Unidirectional information flow is encouraged with emphasis on effectiveness of the communication cycle as opposed to centralized and hierarchical communication. Lastly, there is need for increased accountability for work by those responsible, improvement in work process through human interaction, customization and standardization of services to the different stakeholders. Moreover, physical space should also be improved upon in terms of its setting, modularity, ergonomics and symbolism to invoke a sense of ownership, belonging and safety.

While considering the above achievements, this paper is based on literature review to provide an extensive analysis of the HR practices and how they create value to influence performance within the framework of HR value proposition model and Goal setting theory. Literature of this nature does not represent directly affected peoples' experiences and perceptions. Therefore, studies based on primary data to provide the prevailing reality are scanty and hence recommended. In addition, only HR practices out of the five components of the HR blue print were examined. Whereas this was relevant considering the focus of this paper, studies considering other components such as external environment, internal and external stakeholders, HR resources and HR professionals, are recommended.

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