

# The Effect of 'Human Resource Development Professionals expertise' on effectiveness of Management Development in the civil service of Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

*Several studies identified lack of leadership and management skills as key factors slowing down implementation of reforms in the civil service. This to some extent could be attributed to the way the service develops its staff especially the managers. Management development as an integral component of Human Resource Development is premised on organizational performance improvement mediated through human expertise and human effort. Effectiveness is therefore a factor of the HRD expertise and how it interacts with managers to identify and address their needs for effective performance. This study sought to identify managers' perceptions of HRD professionals' expertise with regard to capacity to facilitate their effective development.*

*The study used descriptive survey design targeting 205 managers drawn from all the 42 ministries in the civil service. Stratified random and simple random sampling was done using computer based methods. Data was collected using a questionnaire with open and Likert-scale questions and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).*

*Majority of the managers did not think the HRD professionals were very skilful in implementation of HRD activities. Only 26.6% thought they had effective communication skills, only 15.7% thought them very proficient in designing and conducting training needs assessments and only 27.2% thought them very good in planning training and development targeted at identified needs. 31.5% rated HRD professionals very good in planning activities to foster development for effective performance but majority said they did not frequently use work-based development strategies like networking, dialogue, career counseling and internal benchmarking. Inferential statistics revealed a positive linear relationship between Effectiveness of management development and HRD expertise ( Pearson's coefficient .421 at  $p < .001$ ,  $F = 37.7$  at  $p < .001$ ,  $t = 6.139$  at  $P < .001$ ).*

*The study concludes that managers had little confidence in the HRD professional's capacity to help them develop effectively since they did not have the required skills and competences nor did they frequently use appropriate work based development strategies. The study recommends that the Government pay attention to recruitment and development of HRD professionals and the Professionals should pay attention to their personal development to enhance their capacity for facilitating management development in the civil service effectively.*

**Key words:** Human Resource Development (HRD) expertise, Dialogue, Networking, Vision, Training needs Assessment, work based development

### 1.0 Introduction

Several studies reviewing progress of reforms in Kenya recommended that training should target development of leadership and management capability to address skills deficits for continued successful implementation of the reforms (Obongó, 2007, Lodge & Kalitowski, 2007, Marwa & Zairi, 2009, Olowu, 1999, Wescott, 1999, Polidano, 2001 and Kiragu, 2002). They proposed that training programs should be aligned to National needs for skills and knowledge. Mhone (2003) and Kamoche (1997) argued that reforms must recognize the centrality of effective management development to generate appropriate skills and competences. Management development is an integral component of Human Resource Development and it is premised on organizational performance improvement mediated through human expertise and human effort. It aims to add value to the achievement of an organization’s goals and objectives through empowering managers to point people in the right direction (alignment) and to develop their beliefs and commitment to the organization’s purpose and direction (engagement).

According to Chalofsky & Reinhart (1988) an effective HRD function is a subsystem of an organization and should have highly trained professional staff demonstrating close working relationships with managers. They should be able to develop a track record of delivering high quality services and this means they should have capacity to acquire, utilize, train develop and retain needed competences for the organization. According to Nadler & Wiggs (1986) the core characteristics of effective Human Resource Development (HRD) managers include: ability to plan Human Resource Development activities that foster training, development and education; capacity to establish goal priorities for HRD activities; capacity to communicate effectively with organizational leaders; ability to identify and develop effective HRD management information systems; capacity to work effectively with line managers and to pay attention to their effective development. Knowles (1990) argued that HRD professionals should demonstrate that what they do correlates with performance and productivity of the organization. This paper, based on an empirical study of management development in the civil service of Kenya explores managers’ perceptions of HRD professionals in relation to their capability to facilitate their effective development.

### 2.0 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine if Human Resource Development Expertise affects effectiveness of Management Development in the civil service of Kenya.

### 3.0 Conceptual framework

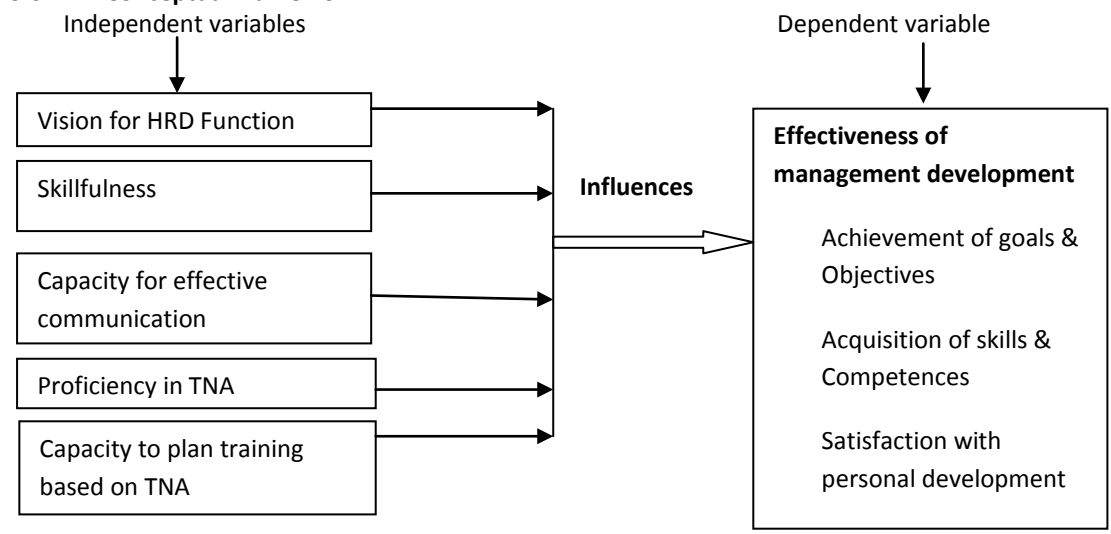


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

#### **4.0 Methodology**

The study adopted an exploratory approach using descriptive survey design to obtain information from a sample of managers in the civil service of Kenya. The study targeted management cadre staff in the civil service of Kenya as defined in the Pay Policy (GOK, 2005). This includes those in job groups P, Q and R totalling 3,482 civil servants, 2,335 of who were deployed in Nairobi at the Ministries Headquarters. The sampling frame was the Integrated Pay and Personnel Database (IPPD) of the civil service (MSPS, 2010).

Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a list of all civil servants in each of the job groups P, Q and R from the IPPD using a computer based random number generator and random numbers tables ([stattreck.com/tables/random.aspx](http://stattreck.com/tables/random.aspx)). A sample of 205 managers was picked randomly from this list. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that included open ended and Likert scale questions and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using the SPSS.

A total 211 questionnaire were administered and 177 usable questionnaires were returned translating to 86% response rate. Cronbach's alpha value was above 0.7 signifying reliability of data and Keiser –Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.779 was well above the suggested minimum value of 0.6 signifying sampling adequacy

#### **5.0 Profile of respondents**

Majority (74%) of the respondents had a Masters degree followed by 24.3% who had a Bachelors degree and 1.2% who had PhDs. Only a small proportion (0.6%) of the respondents had only a diploma /certificate. The study revealed that 38.1% of the respondents had worked in either job group P or Q or R for 6- 10 years, 26.7% for over 10 years, 18.1% for 2-5 years and 17.5% for less than 2 years. The results showed that on average the respondents had experience of 6-10 years as managers in the civil service. Majority of the managers (43.4%) supervised less than 10 employees, 35.8% supervised between 10-30 employees, 8.7% supervised between 31 to 50 employees and only 12.1% had more than 50 employees under their supervision.

#### **6.0 Findings and Discussion**

The data collected was analyzed for each variable to determine the effect of HRD expertise on management development. This section describes and discusses the findings.

##### **6.1 Vision for the Human Resource Development function**

The study found that only 34.9% of the managers thought that the Human resource development professionals had a very good vision for the HRD function, 38.9% thought it was good and only a small proportion (2.3%) thought it was poor. Empirical findings by Nadler & Wiggs (1986) showed that a vision for HRD function is an essential framework for the professionals that allows them establishes goal priorities over a period of time and to have a futuristic approach to learning. Swanson & Holton (2000) and Knowles (1990) argued that HRD professional's vision must demonstrate correlation of HRD activities with improved performance and productivity. The study concludes that managers were not fully aware of HRD professional's vision for their function and it is imperative that professionals ensure that theirs is a shared vision for the managers to support it for their effective development.

### 6.2 Skilfulness in implementing HRD activities

Only 34.9% of respondents rated HRD professionals as very skilful in implementation of HRD activities. 38.9% rated them good and 24% rated them average. Only 1.7% rated them as poor and a very small proportion (0.6%) rated them as very poor. The results support findings by Abdulla (2009) and Bing et al (2003) that HRD managers lacked knowledge and skills to carry out the HRD function effectively and to foster learning and development at work. They argued that many lacked knowledge and skills in training needs assessment, evaluation and follow up assessments. Nadler & Nadler (1989), Harrison & Kessels (2004) argued that HRD managers should be knowledgeable and skilful if they are to facilitate others to learn. The study concludes that managers do not have sufficient confidence in the HRD Professional's skilfulness in implementing the training and development activities. This increases practice distance and reduces effectiveness of development initiatives.

### 6.3 Capacity for effective communication

Only 26.6% of the respondents rated HRD professionals very good while 36.7% rated them as good in capacity for effective communication. A total 7.9% rated them poor or very poor. The findings do not support empirical findings by Nadler & Wiggs (1986) that HRD professionals must possess effective communication skills which they use to direct the staff, communicate with organizational leaders and to position HRD as a serious and vital component of the organizations strategic future. Critten (2002) argued that HRD professionals should be able to embrace dialogue and the art of listening and asking empowering questions to encourage managers to seek solutions to their problems in the locus of real work. The study concludes that HRD professionals require improving their capacity for effective communication in order to be more effective in their work.

### 6.4 Proficiency in designing and conducting needs assessment of managers

Only 15.7% of the respondents rated HRD professionals as very good at designing and conducting training needs assessment of managers. Majority (52.9%) thought they were just good, 20.3% rated them average and 11% rated them poor or very poor. The results negate Harrison and Kessels (2004) argument that a changing world of work requires HRD professionals who can create a framework through which managers can identify their needs and suggest how they want them addressed. The study concludes that HRD professionals require to enhance their capacity to conduct training needs assessment for managers.

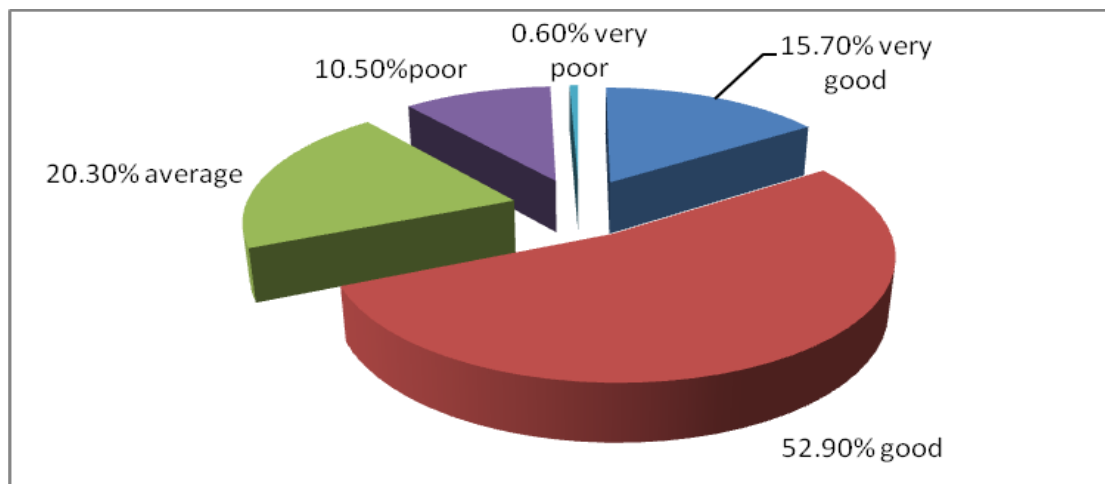


Figure 2. Proficiency in Designing and Conducting TNA

### 6.5 Capacity to plan training and development targeted at identified needs

Only 27.2% of the respondents rated HRD professionals as very good while 42.2% rated them as good, 24.3% as average and 6.2% as poor in ability to plan training and development targeted at identified

needs. The findings contradict Nadler & Wiggs (1986), Abdulla (2009), Sambrook (2002) and Bing et al (2003) who argued that one of the characteristics of effective HRD managers include expertise to diagnose needs and plan HRD activities that foster training education and development. The study concludes that managers are not very confident in the HRD Professionals' capacity to identify and address their needs for development.

**6.6 Rating HRD professionals on their other roles**

When asked to rate HRD professionals further, 31.5% of the respondents rated them very good with regard to clarity of their roles and 29.3% thought them very good in planning activities to foster development for effective performance.

**Table 1 Rating HRD Professionals on their Roles**

	clear about their roles	Able to prioritise in annual training projections	Can plan activities to foster effective performance	Actively network with managers
<b>Very good</b>	31.5%	23.7%	29.3%	19.5%
<b>Good</b>	32.1%	40.2%	39.7%	23%
<b>Average</b>	34.5%	29.6%	25.3%	40.8%
<b>Poor/very poor</b>	1.8%	6.5%	5.8%	16.6%
<b>Mean</b>	2.07	2.19	2.08	2.59
<b>SD</b>	.873	.873	.896	1.07

However, only 19.5% thought them very good in networking and only 23.7% rated them very good in prioritizing in annual training projections. The results indicate that managers did not perceive HRD professionals as being clear about their roles especially in prioritizing and planning activities to foster effective performance of managers and involving them through networking. According to Wouters, Buyens & Dewettinck(2001), HRD professionals should use strategies that are effective in adding value to organizational learning.

**6.7 Techniques frequently used by HRD professionals**

With regard to techniques used, only 9.9% of the respondents said dialogue was used very frequently while a majority 41% said it was used only sometimes. It is worth noting that 17.7% said it was never used in their ministries. Only 18.9% respondents said internal benchmarking of successes in service delivery was done very frequently and only 6.4% of the respondents said the HRD managers helped them identify their goals for learning and to choose appropriate resources and methods for their self development.

With regard to counselling for careers, only 5.5% of respondents said it was done very frequently while 24.8% said it was frequent. A majority 38.2% said it was never done. Computer supported

learning was done very frequently according to 14.6% of the respondents, 34.8% said it was frequent, 37.2% said sometimes and 13.4% said it was never done. The study concludes that overall most management development activities in the civil service are formal and the HRD professionals do not use more appropriate non-formal work based development techniques very frequently.

**Table 2 Techniques frequently used by HRD Professionals**

	Very Frequent	Frequent	sometimes	Never	Mean	SD
Help managers to dialogue with peers in the ministry	9.9%	31.2%	41.1%	17.7%	2.67	.884
Publicise initiatives that have worked for internal benchmark	18.9%	26.3%	29.1%	25.7%	2.62	1.07
Help managers identify goals choose resources and methods of learning	6.4%	42.2%	32.9%	18.5%	2.64	.86
Career counselling computer supported/e-learning	5.5% 14.6%	24.8% 34.8%	31.5% 37.2%	38.2% 13.4%	3.02 2.49	.92 .90

**6.8 Inferential Statistics**

**Table 3 Pearson’s Correlations for HRD Expertise**

	HRD expertise	Effectiveness of MD
HRD expertise	1	.421**
Pearson correlation		.000
Sig (2tailed)		
N	177	177

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

Pearson’s correlation coefficient of .421\*\* p<.001 confirmed that there is a positive strong relationship between HRD expertise and effectiveness of management development.

**6.9 Regression**

Regression analysis using SPSS gave coefficient R equal to .421 p<.001 confirming there was a moderate to strong relationship between HRD expertise and effectiveness of management development. The F statistic of 37.685 significant at p<.001, confirmed the model’s goodness of fit in explaining the variations. The Beta value of .421 and the t value equal to 6.139 p<.001 confirmed that

Human Resource Development Expertise is an important predictor of effectiveness of management development.

**Table 4 Regression model for HRD Expertise**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.421	.177	.172	10.054

Predictors: (Constant), human resource development expertise

**ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3809.675	37.685	.000
	Residual	17691.354		
	Total	21501.029		

Predictors: (Constant), HRD expertise: Dependent Variable: effectiveness of management development

**Coefficients (a)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error			Beta
1	(Constant)	35.746	2.561		13.957	.000
	HRD expertise	.433	.071	.421	6.139	.000

Dependent Variable: effectiveness of management development

These findings support those of Becker (1993), Schmidt & Lines (2002) Harrison & Kessels (2004) and Bing et.al. (2003) that HRD professionals are the driving force for success of organizations due to their skills, competences, knowledge and experience. In the absence of their skills, then effective development of managers will not take place and this will affect organizational performance and achievement of goals and objectives.

**7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study concluded that there was a positive linear relationship between HRD expertise and effectiveness of management development. However, perception of the managers that HRD professionals were not very good in their various roles is of great concern since it has a direct impact on effectiveness of management development. The professionals should pay attention to their personal development especially to build capacity for effective communication in order to be able to market the HRD function and reduce the practice distance with managers. There is need for the Professionals to ensure they get buy in through learning to network in order to effectively involve managers in their development. This way, they will be able also to position the HRD function strategically for it to add value to the achievement of National, organizational and personal goals and objectives.

The Government should pay attention to recruitment and development of HRD professionals to ensure those in the service have capacity for strategic management development if it will improve service delivery and ensure the civil service contributes effectively to economic development.

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