



**INTERPLAY BETWEEN LEADERSHIP INGREDIENTS, RESOURCE BASED HUMAN RESOURCE MODEL (RBV) AND PEOPLE ORIENTED HR POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

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**Abstract:** - After the rapid expansion of higher education institutions in Uganda during the last twenty years, the industry is at crossroads of academic excellence and survival amidst the challenges of managing a volatile human resource. Institutions of Higher Learning in the country, particularly those that are owned by the government and mandated by the Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Council for Higher Education, continue to operate under weak leadership, poor human resource management policies and practices. The notable existence of scarce resources pertaining in all government units in Uganda, compounded by weak leadership models pertaining in public Institutions of Higher Learning is a situation forcing such Institutions to exist with negative growth and poor performance. On the other hand, innovative Institutions with strong leadership structures, pro-employee policies and practices, despite being mandated by regulatory bodies, have established their distinct brand and are moving into the excellence domain and into a competitive zone of global rating (a good number of Universities in South Africa and Kenya). Scholars have explored both leadership and management models that can bring about positive changes while utilizing the meager resources. Institutions just need to work smartly but not harder. This paper presents the Resource Based Human Resource Model (RBV) integrated with 'people oriented policies as the best strategy if Higher Institutions of Learning in Uganda are to achieve employee commitment, competence, congruence and cost effectiveness (4Cs HRM model) and competitive edge in their endeavour to train and educate quality products for self- sustenance and the industry.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Resource Based View of the firm (RBV), Higher Education, 4Cs HRM model Organization Resources, performance measurement and Results Oriented Management

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**Introduction:** Government Institutions of Higher Learning have failed to tackle the fundamental causes of industrial unrest in these institutions. Reviewed research reports attribute this state of affairs to poor management practices caused by weak leadership (Kayiira,

2009; Grant, 2002; Ramsden, 1998; Meek, Wood, & Fiona 1997; Kyamanywa, 1996). Advocates of ideal human resource management models and people oriented policies applied under quality leadership could see the situation changing for the better (Gosh, 2011; Barney, Wright, & Ketchen 2001; Bijur, 2000).

This paper attempts to present the Resource Based View of the firm HR model (RBV) integrated with 'people oriented policies' as advanced in the 4 Cs HR model as the best strategy if we are to witness employee stability, performance and institutional growth and development in Uganda's Institutions of Higher Learning.

**Concept of leadership?** : The terms leadership and managership are not synonymous. Whereas management only operates where there are organized structures to create roles, leadership can easily and ably operate in completely unorganized environment.

Gosh (2011) defines leadership as the ability to influence a group of people towards the achievement of goals. Armstrong, (2012); Koontz, and Weihrich, (2003) concur with this definition and express leadership as 'the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals'. This implies that leadership encourages people to develop both willingness to work and to work with zeal and confidence. Leadership transforms potential into reality. The term can also be defined as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group towards goal achievement in a given situation (Gosh, 2011; Armstrong 2012). It is the human factor that helps a group to identify where it is going and then motivates it towards its goals. Without leadership, an organization would be only a 'confusion' of people and machines. Tittlemore, (2003) further described leadership as "a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task." Management and leadership are two distinctive aspects of bringing order where

there would be chaos. Whereas a manager plans, organizes and carries out all those other managerial functions, the major role of a leader is to seek defined objectives and lead personnel towards the accomplishment of these objectives. Leadership entails bringing about change in an individual or in a group of individuals so they can perform willingly and with zeal. Gosh, (2011) asserts that effective leaders hardly use coercive power to compel subordinates and peers to follow them. Rather, they mostly use legitimate and information power they have by virtue of the positions they hold in organizations. Leaders, Hersey, *et al.* (2008) assert, use expert power because of the talents, knowledge, skills, and specialist abilities they possess. Instead of coercing workers to compel them to behave as desired, leaders apply equitable rewards to win employee confidence and commitment. Charisma too, enables leaders to have a positive influence on workers, and create opportunities for interpersonal influence. Leaders in organizations too, are usually points of reference because of the expertise they possess with readiness to share it (Hersey, *et al.* 2008).

This paper concerns itself with the possibility of applying the Resource Based HR Model and 'people oriented policies' (4 Cs model outcome) in Government Institutions of Higher Learning by top leadership with a view to bringing about positive change; where over the years, top leadership has been failing to curb both student and employee unrest and thus resulting in conflicts, resistance and ultimately, poor performance at all fronts of their operations.

**Higher Education in Uganda:** Higher Education in Uganda started with the establishment of Makerere in 1922 as a humble technical school. There are currently 34 Universities in Uganda of which only 5 are owned by Government (Kayiira 2009 & Businge Conan 2014). These Institutions of Higher Learning are offering awards ranging from, Bachelor's degrees up to PhDs. They also facilitate and encourage research in addition to

providing training programs towards gainful employment. The Institutions admit students holding A' Level certificates and persons with diploma or equivalent.

Whereas all public Universities which, by formation, have charters only 7 of the privately owned Institutions of Higher Learning have Charters. These include Islamic University in Uganda which got its Charter in 1988, Uganda Christian University (1999), Uganda Martyrs University (1993), Ndejje University (1992), Bugema University (1994), Nkumba University (1999) and Kampala International University (2001).

**Why can't Public Universities perform better despite their legitimate existence?:** Research has proved that Higher education in Uganda is hanging on a thread. As Businge (2014), observed "... it is just a matter of time before Higher Education goes down crashing, if nothing is quickly done. Paying Lecturers low salaries, hiring inadequate staff, failure to expand, ignoring staff development and training plans and failing to de-emphasize conflicts with workers - are just part of what Public Universities are going through. In addition, shortened school practice, congested Lecture rooms, food rationing in University kitchens and reduced allowances, are just a slice of what goes on in Uganda's Public Universities (Businge 2014). Leadership in Public Institutions of Higher learning argues that all that is done in the interest of remaining afloat with the low funding from government and donors. However, Hoopes, *et al.* (2003); Harman, and Grant (2002); Meek, *et. al.*, (1997), are of the view that given people oriented leadership in these Institutions, the situation would be a lot better. To prove this point, Meek, *et al.* (1997) further observes that in developed countries like Germany, 95% of all Universities are publicly owned, well funded and that getting funds for research is not a privilege.

### **Why weak leadership in Institutions of Higher Learning? :**

World over, organizations are established for purposes of offering quality goods and/or services using efficient and effective techniques of production and delivery through knowledgeable, skilled and committed workforce. Employee commitment to an organization's mission and vision can only be achieved and sustained under quality and supportive leadership. For that matter, to guide employees towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives, there is need to have in place efficient Administration with quality leadership skills capable of resourcing, recruiting, maintaining and motivating the human resource using people oriented policies and practices that are likely to give organizations a competitive edge (Armstrong, 2012; Harman & Grant 2002; Meek, Wood, & Fiona, 1997).

Secondly, through able and strong leadership, institutions are able to build employee morale to perform willingly - a situation that aids authority to generate favorable worker attitude for improved performance. For example aspects like goal setting, training, job security, participative management, good human relations and equity, enhance employee confidence and congruence.

Thirdly, supportive leadership puts in place practices such procedural and distributive justice. When this happens, employees are assured of having their desires, wants and needs addressed by Administration. This practice in turn controls workers' behavior and enhances their willingness to put in extra effort towards the achievement of the institution's targets. Workplace values such as concern for quality, honesty, mutual respect, calculated risk taking, customer focus and team spirit are built and enhanced (Bijur, Peter 2000). Quite often when management fails control behavior, informal leadership takes over (Ghosh, 2009). Could Public Institutions of Higher Learning in Uganda be lacking leaders with special ingredients?

### **What are the special ingredients that distinguish a leader from a manager?**

Leaders should have the ability to use power responsibly (Beardwell, & Claydon, 2010). Organization Administrators hold leadership positions legitimately. This is as a result of the specialist expertise and the special appeal they possess. On the basis of the authority vested into them, they should have the ability to use the reward power to promote employee morale and job satisfaction and apply sanctions and punitive measures only when necessary (Armstrong, 2012; Koontz, Weihrich, 2003; Sathye, 2004).

Due to the fact that leaders possess people oriented skills, they should have the ability to appreciate that human beings have different motivation forces at different times and in different situations and therefore have the willingness to adapt to changes in given circumstances.

Leaders should have the ability to inspire employees especially during trying moments. Negative judgment should rarely be applied. Team playing is the way forward if organizations are to grow and advance. For that matter ability to act in a manner that will develop a climate conducive to responding to and arousing motivation should be top on the agenda of leaders. Training and development, performance appraisal followed by either rewards such as promotion, salary increment, job enrichment and/or enlargement and transfer on promotion are practices that can enhance employee cost effectiveness competence (Sathye, 2004). This requires leaders with specific and special qualities to enable Public Institutions of Higher Learning to grow to higher heights. A number of scholars, Armstrong, (2006; Ordaz et al. (2003), Hoopes, *et al.* (2003) have identified the special skills a leader should possess. The most significant abilities and skills an effective leader should possess are presented in the following paragraph.

### **Leadership qualities**

Among the tested practices that have proved to bring about employee commitment, congruence and ultimately performance are: being supportive. Leaders need to foster a positive environment that allows work teams to flourish. Also rewards should be aligned to the rewards and recognition systems that best match teams to profile and deliver results (Beardwell, and Claydon, 2010; Armstrong, 2006). Secondly, honesty and integrity enable employees to appreciate where they stand with their leaders. Integrity earns leaders respect. Further, empathy enables leaders to put themselves in the shoes of others and thus treat them with a lot of care and concern. Also, people should be treated with respect and courtesy - regardless of their social status (Armstrong, 2006). Leaders should be focused in whatever they do and should believe in themselves. In addition a leader should have passion for what he does. He/she has to live, breathe, eat and sleep his/her organization's mission. Also, excellent persuasions abilities are skills that make people believe his/her credibility on top of possessing clarity and assertive skills. Also clarity enables a leader to say "yes" to the right things - and "no" to others. In addition to the mentioned qualities, humility is a virtue that enables a leader to have confidence while realizing the point at which it becomes hubris. Further, empowering employees with the right attitudes, skills and abilities is part of what a leader does. Last but not least being communicative is what attracts leaders to have a willing following. Leaders should therefore share the organization's strategy with those around them. Lastly Leverage team strengths are what make a leader position his/her organization. Therefore, a leader should appreciate each person's strengths and place them in positions where they can flourish motivates them to perform.

### **Institutions of Higher Learning in Uganda and effective leadership**

Management scholars and practitioners have come up with models, practices and policies to try and promote quality leadership and ultimately employee performance in both private and public sectors. Among them is the resource based view of the firm advanced by Barney, 1991. The views of this model are discussed below:

#### **Resource based View (RBV) of the Firm**

Resources are the inputs or factors available to an organization, which help to perform its operations (Barney 1991, 1999; Barney, et. al. 2001); Ordaz, *et al.* 2003, p. 96; Hoopes, *et al.* 2003). Examples of such resources could be the organization's internal and external funding base, infrastructure, information communication technology and equipment; and intangible resources in the form of human capital or capabilities (knowledge and skills) (Barney 1991).

The resource-based view of a firm explains its ability to deliver sustainable competitive advantage when resources are managed such that their outcomes cannot be imitated by competitors, which ultimately creates a competitive barrier (Hooley and Greenley 2005, p. 96, Smith & Rupp 2002, p. 48). RBV explains that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage is reached by virtue of unique resources being rare, valuable, inimitable, non-tradable, and non-substitutable, as well as firm-specific (Barney 1999 cited by, Makadok 2001, p. 94) These rare firm's resources cannot be transferred, or copied, and simultaneously, they add value to a firm while being rare. It also highlights the fact that not all resources of a firm may contribute to a firm's sustainable competitive advantage. Varying performance between firms is a result of heterogeneity of assets (Lopez 2005, p. 662, Helfat and Peteraf 2003, p. 1004) and RBV is focused on the factors that cause these differences to prevail (Lopez 2005, p. 662). For that matter, the paper is considering the human resources' capabilities

enhanced as a result of supportive and competent leadership in place.

Interplay between the organization's intangible resources (knowledge, skills and ICT), and people oriented HR policies such as: equitable rewards, job security, training and development, worker involvement and smooth exit policy bring about employee commitment, competence, congruence, and cost effectiveness (4 Cs) (Armstrong 2006, 2008 & 2012; Hoopes, D.G.; Madsen, T.L.; Walker, G. 2003).

#### **Interplay between Recourse Based Model and People Oriented Organization Policies**

According to Armstrong (2006); Porter, (2004, 1985), once an organization hires employees, from a reliable source, trains, develops and compensates them equitably, workers are most likely to exhibit commitment to their jobs and loyalty to their institutions. Commitment is measured through attitude surveys, labour turnover and absenteeism statistics (Armstrong Michael 2006; Bijur, 2000). Secondly, training and development as advocated by the Recourse Based Management Model promotes employee competence. This means that employees are most likely to perform smartly and not just harder and thereby providing quality services. Also, training improves employees' skills and abilities, which in turn improves workers' potential for higher-level output. On the other hand, development not improves executive and workers' knowledge but also helps to shape workers' attitude towards their respective roles and duties and the image of their Institutions as well.

Thirdly, when recommendations of the Resource Based Model supported by 'pro-people policies' are instituted in work places, congruence whereby management and workers share the same vision, organizational goals, and work together to attain them is achieved. Congruence is revealed by absence of grievances and conflicts. Employees perform better under harmonious industrial relations. Lastly cost-effectiveness (operational efficiency) which relates to maximization of output at the

lowest input cost is another likely out-come when the 4Cs model is promoted by organizations (Ludwig, & Pemberton, 2011).

#### Way forward

Contemporary management scholars emphasize techniques such as management by wondering around (MBWA), inclusive management during planning, decision making and resource allocation as some of the ways that could improve workplace relationship and thus promote employee performance. However, there is no one best way to motivate staff apart from trying a variety of techniques depending on the environmental dictates. Application of people oriented practices by quality leadership in Institutions of Higher Learning whether public or private is what will promote employee commitment, competence, congruence and cost-effectiveness.

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