

Talent Management Practices and Perceived Sustainable Competitive Advantage of the Kenya's Commercial Banks in Nairobi County: Interaction Effect of Organizational Justice

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ABSTRACT

The inability of commercial banks to attain sustainable competitive advantage that can be defended over time and that which competitors are unable to imitate have exposed banks to survival challenges in their operating environment. The purpose of this study was to analyze the interaction effect of organizational justice on the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage of commercial banks in Nairobi County in Kenya. The research was anchored on the resource based view theory, positivism research approach and explanatory research design. Additionally, 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaires were employed in collecting data from a sample size of 354 given the 42 commercial banks with a target population of 3,098 employees. Given the moderation model by Hayes (2012), multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at a .05 significance level. The results showed that organizational justice moderated the relationship between talent management and perceived sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta = -.066$, $SE = 0.025$, $p < .05$). In the mod graph, it was evident that all the three study variables converged at the apex signifying that within the commercial banks in Nairobi County, talent management practices, and organizational justice forms part of the perceived sustainable competitive advantage. The study concluded that when talent is managed well among the employees, they become more competitive and become a strategic asset. Moreover, with the organizational justice in place, the relationship between talent management practices and perceived competitive advantage is enhanced. As a result, it is critical for bank managers to consider developing and implementing responsible talent management practices a long side organizational justice strategies that promote fairness, transparency, justice, equity, respect, dignity and civility to make employees realize their full potential for sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Talent Management Practices; Organizational Justice; Perceived Sustainable Competitive Advantage

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive and dynamic business surroundings, attainment of sustainable competitive advantage is an important ingredient in most organizations including commercial banks. Subsequently, as singled out in the 1980's and 1990's influential work by Porter (1985) and Barney (1991), sustainable competitive advantage is attained when a firm heeds to its external position internal capabilities. From the value creation context by Lippman and Rumelt (2003), competitive advantage causes the revenue to exceed firm's expenses. On the other hand, competitive advantage is defined as the ability of the firm to retain more earnings than normal (Peteraf, 1993). From the commercial banks perspective, the attainment of competitive advantage implies offering of valuable products or services to the customers as compared to the competitors (Saloner, Shepard, & Podolny, 2001). (Saloner, Shepard, & Podolny, 2001). In the same breadth, Collis and Montgomery (2009) supports the fact that a firm can sustain its competitive advantage through

identifying, use and upgrade of selected superior competitive strategies that outclass those by the competitors. As one of the competitive strategies, talent which is in form of employees' skills and competencies is a significant accomplishment factor (Lockwood, 2006). More importantly, talent as pointed out by Gebelein (2006) has been recognized as it plays a fundamental role in achieving the sustainable competitive advantage. As a result, human resource departments of most organizations have been found to do more than just hiring and firing.

Talent management, which involves attracting, developing, and retaining high-performing employees, has become a strategic imperative for organizations. According to Schweyer (2004), talent management practices comprises of a set of activities. These include sourcing, screening, selection, on boarding, development, deployment and renewal of the workforce. Undeniably, talent management practice plays a crucial role as far as development and discovering of the new talent in the market is concerned (Mary, Enyinna, & Ezinne, 2015). However, the extent to which talent management practices contribute to sustainable competitive advantage may be influenced by other factors within the organizational context. One such factor is organizational justice, which refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace. The truth of the matter is that organizational justice entails the fair treatment of employees (Randeree, 2008) and describes the role of fairness at work hence is directly related to the workplace (Zhang & Agarwal, 2009). Ideally, enhancing of organizational justice results in improved outcomes from employees. Therefore, managers' sole aim through distributive and procedural justice should be to decrease employees' turnover rate alongside improving job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Abu Elanain, 2009). This paper aims to explore the moderating effect of organizational justice on the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage. By understanding this relationship, organizations can develop effective strategies for talent management and enhance their competitive advantage in the long run.

Problem Statement

In Kenya, Commercial banks play an important role in processing credit, lending, accepting deposits as well as availing credit to economic agents. Economically, commercial banks are the backbone since they play a major role in accumulating capital that goes a long way in improving the resource allocation in society at large. Overtime, the list of registered commercial banks has been lengthening with over forty banks as per the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) (2021). Despite this, the findings regarding these banks' performance indicates dwindling profits by 29.5% over and above market share (CBK, 2020). In order to revamp the Kenya's banking sector therefore, the study brings on board the concept of talent management practices which goes a long way in improving the performance in terms of perceived sustainable competitive advantage. Organizational justice is brought in as a factor that influences the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage. Studies have analyzed the strategies in general to gain competitive advantage (Gitonga, Kilika, & Obere, 2016; Weor, 2018) while others have assessed the talent management concept in view of organizational (Lyria, Namusonge, & Karanja, 2017; Rukunga & Nzulwa, 2018) as well as employee performance (Mkamburi & Kamaara, 2017; Owino, 2022). Talent management and competitive advantage have been examined but in different context (Moturi, 2013; Wandia, 2013). Moreover, there exist studies that have linked organizational justice and talent management (Gelens, Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019). In order to fill the gap, the study sought to evaluate the interaction effect of organizational justice in the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage of commercial banks registered in Nairobi County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to link all the variables, the study was buttressed by the resource based view (RBV) theory that is associated with the work of Barney (1991) and Peteraf (1993). The theory asserts that firm's resources are

crucial in the quest for achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. Thus, RBV theory sets forth that the firm specific resources owned determines the firm's sustainable competitive advantage. The theory singles out human resources suggesting that its effective management and utilization can create a valuable resource that competitors cannot easily replicate leading to sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, when commercial banks invest in the effective talent management practices, it can lead to higher levels of employee performance and productivity, which can contribute to sustained competitive advantage. Moreover, existence of organizational justice help enhance various talented employees to be committed towards the organization which in turn contributes to attainment of sustainable competitive advantage.

Talent Management Practices and Perceived Sustainable Competitive Advantage

In a firm, internal resources have a crucial role to play in the performance of the organization. The resource based view of the firm gives importance to building unique, hard to imitate and valuable resources (Barney & Hesterly, 2010). Consequently, competitive advantage is dependent on the valuable, rare and hard to copy resources that reside in the organization and human resources is one of those scarce resources. Talent management is a comprehensive approach that encompasses various human resource practices such as recruitment, selection, training, development, performance management, and succession planning. Furthermore, these practices are designed to identify, attract, and nurture talented individuals within the organization. According to Cappelli and Keller (2014), the main aim of talent management is getting the right persons in the right job positions.

Talent management importance is evident since organizations' decisions have switched to human capital as a source of competitive advantage (Pagan-Castaño, Ballester-Miquel, Sánchez-García, & Guijarro-García, 2022). Talent management has been derived as a source of competitive advantage as it ensures that human resources have competence that can't be easily replicated (Rofaida, 2016). Organizations that effectively manage their talent can gain a competitive edge by leveraging the skills, knowledge, and expertise of their employees. There needs to be the ability as well as capacity within the organization to recognize persons who can create value and deliver competitive advantage (Rabbi, Ahad, Kousar, & Ali, 2015). By aligning talent management strategies with the organization's goals and objectives, organizations can create a pool of high-potential employees who contribute to innovation, productivity, and competitive advantage (Wandia, 2013).

Moderating Effect of Organizational Justice

The term organizational justice was first coined by Greenberg (1987) which represents individual's perceptions and reactions to fairness towards the organization. Justice in an organization occurs when employees are treated fairly and equally (Alsalem & Alhaiyani, 2007). In addition, organizational justice is applied in salary distribution, decision making and appreciative work behavior (Cropanzano, Slaughter, & Bachiochi, 2005). Through organizational justice, innovative climate for potential and enthusiastic employees is promoted (Karkoulian, Assaker, & Hallak, 2016). Higher level of organizational justice is related to job satisfaction, job commitment, positive work attitudes and behaviors (Widyanti, Irhamni, & Silvia Ratna, 2020). On the other hand, lower level of organizational justice is related with negative effects such as stress, poor employees' psychological well-being, employee turnover, retaliatory intentions (Silva & Caetano, 2014).

The relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage may be influenced by the presence of organizational justice. O'Connor and Crowley-Henry (2019) did a research on the role of the perceived organizational justice in shaping the outcomes of talent management practices. The study proposed that in organizations pursuing exclusive talent management programs, employee perceptions of organizational justice of the exclusive talent management practices may affect their employee engagement, which may influence both organizational and employee outcomes. The study further argued

that responsible talent management practices promote achievement of multi-level sustainable outcomes such as decent work, employee well-being and organizational well-being. It also argued that inclusivity; corporate responsibility; and equity and equal employment opportunity are the key underlying principles of a responsible talent management system. Another study by Gelens et al. (2014) has examined how perceived organizational justice mediates the relationship between talent management and non-high potential employees outcomes, that is, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and the intention to leave) in the public sector. The results indicated that perceptions of distributive justice were significantly higher for employees identified as a high potential. When employees perceive high levels of organizational justice, they are more likely to view talent management practices as fair and equitable. This perception can enhance their motivation, engagement, and willingness to contribute to the organization's success. Conversely, when employees perceive low levels of organizational justice, talent management practices may be viewed as biased or arbitrary, leading to reduced commitment and performance. Therefore, organizational justice can moderate the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage. The study thus sought to test H_{01} :

H₀₁; Organizational justice has no significant effect in the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage of commercial banks in Nairobi county in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Moreover, positivism believe that research can be undertaken by using a well-developed hypotheses derived from literature or existing theory and tested using a large number of randomly selected samples (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011). Positivism focuses on quantifiable observations of phenomenon as well as generalizing about the phenomenon through statistical analysis. Positivists view the researcher as existing independently to what is being researched and that the researcher will not impact upon the topic being investigated or modify reality.

Explanatory research design was used in this study as it is appropriate in explaining the nature of the existing relationships in investigating the cause and effect relationship between the study variables in arriving at the study conclusions (Zikmund *et al.*, 2014).

The study used a positivism philosophical approach towards arriving at the conclusions on the research problem. Positivism suits this study since as per (Vanderstoep & Johnson, 2008), it comprises of the research objectives and assumptions which views the researcher as an objective observer and reporter of data through sample selection procedures, measurement of variables and statistical analysis. Explanatory research design helps in explaining relationships between variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011). In this study therefore, the relationship was examined between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage. A total of 3098 employees of 329 branches of various commercial banks in Nairobi was targeted. However, 354 respondents were sampled to answer the structured questionnaires. Talent management practices as an independent variable was estimated using the 5 point Likert scale items as used by (Rabbi *et al.*, 2015). Organizational justice (as the moderating variable was measured using the following 5-point Likert scale adopted from (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2013). Alternatively, 5-point Likert scale to measure perceived sustainable competitive advantage was used (Hesterly & Barney, 2008; Vanpoucke, Vereecke, & Wetzels, 2014). The study adopted moderation technique (Model 1) suggested by (Hayes, 2012). According to (Memon *et al.*, 2019), a moderating variable can strengthen, soften, buffer or antagonize the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable. Thus, if the moderator variable is significant, it might have an impact on how strongly the dependent and independent variables interact. The following model was used to test for moderation;

$$PSCA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OJ + \beta_2 (TMP * OJ) + e_{it} \dots \dots \dots H_{01}$$

KEY; PSCA (Perceived Sustainable Competitive Advantage); OJ (Organizational Justice); TMP (Talent Management Practices)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The R-squared value was 0.5442, indicating that the independent variables (talent management practices and organizational justice) explains about 54.42% of the variation in the dependent variable (perceived sustainable competitive advantage). The analysis also includes a test of the interaction effect between talent management practices and organizational justice, which is significant with an R-squared change value of 0.0101, an F-statistic of 126.942 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage varies depending on the level of organizational justice. The moderation model was about the relationship between talent management practices and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage. The results in Table 1 showed a positive and significant relationship between talent management practices and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta=.814$, $SE=0.097$, $p<.05$) which was positive and significant. The relationship between the moderator (organizational justice) and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage was $\beta=.295$, $SE=0.097$, $p<.05$ which was positive and significant.

Table 1: Moderation Analysis

	PSCA(Perceived Sustainable Competitive Advantage)
Variables	Coef. (SE)
Talent management practices (TMP)	.814*** (.097)
Organization justice (OJ)	.295***(.097)
Interaction (OJ*TMP)	-.066***(.025)
Constant	1.086***(.384)
	F=126.942
	P= .000

Note: Coef.. = coefficient, SE = standard error. * $p <0.05$; ** $p <0.01$; *** $p <0.001$.

Source: Researchers (2022)

The interaction effect given the talent management practices (independent variable) and the moderator (organizational justice) in view of the perceived sustainable competitive advantage was $\beta =-.066$, $SE=0.025$, $p<.05$ which was negative but significant. This means that the introduction of organizational justice as moderator reversed the relationship. According to (Hayes, 2012), the goal of a moderator is either to improve or reduce the direct relationship. In this research, it is clear from this research that the interaction with organizational justice (moderator) weakened the relationship between talent management practices and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage commercial bank employees. As a result, hypothesis H_{01} : Organizational justice has no significant effect in the relationship between talent management practices and perceived sustainable competitive advantage of commercial banks in Nairobi county in Kenya was rejected.

The study therefore concluded that organization justice does have a significant but negative effect as it weakened or antagonized the relationship between talent management practices and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage.

The results supports the findings of (Usmani & Jamal, 2013)who concluded that distributive justice, interactional justice, and personal time are all connected to job satisfaction. Employees are willing to do more work and perform better when they believe they are being treated properly (Yardan, Köse, & Köse, 2014). (Akram, Lei, Haider, & Hussain, 2020)found that organizational justice has a strong and favorable impact on the innovative work behavior of employees. Further, the study supports the findings of (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019) who articulated that when implementing talent management practices, Human Resource managers and practitioners should emphasize on consistency and transparency in their practices. They prescribed that management must elucidate and be open about their talent management selection procedures and create awareness among employees. Only then can fairness become a positive influence on employee perceptions on talent management practices. That employees must be provided with clear and transparent procedures, and be treated equitably, dignity and with respect before the actual selection or commencement of the talent management program (that is, whether or not they are included in the talent pool). When organizations implement talent management programs, it is important that they use selection procedures that permit those the organization considers ‘non-talented’ to demonstrate their potential contributions. This will display fair procedures for all employees, and will affect the input or output ratio perceptions of employees, as they will perceive that their organizational relationship is based on fair and open procedures, and thus will be less likely to form negative perceptions of justice.

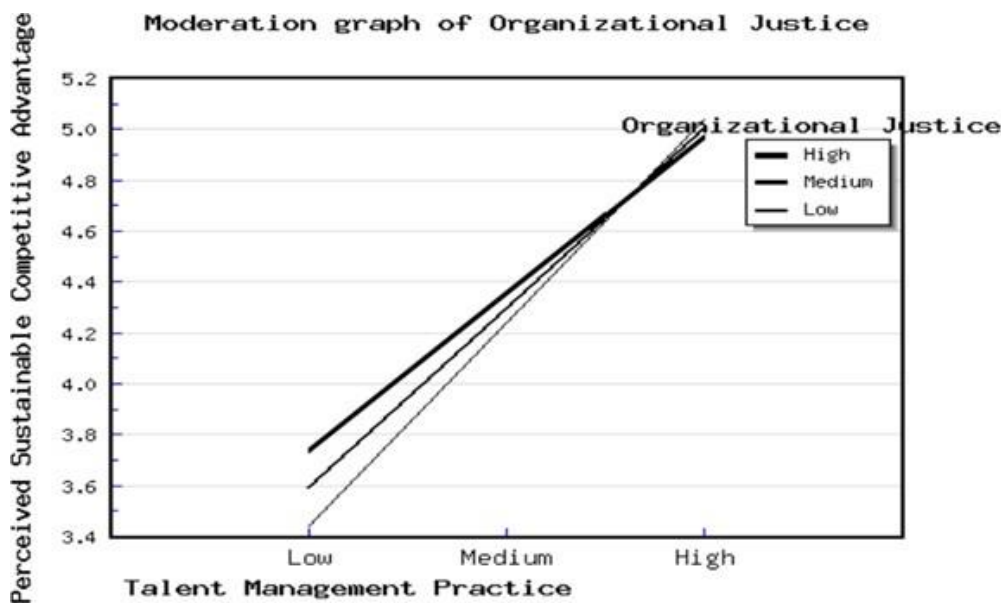


Figure 1: Mod graph of the Interaction between talent management practices and organizational justice

Source: Researchers(2022)

Figure 1 indicates that as talent is managed well among the employees, they become more competitive and become a strategic asset. Moreover, with the organizational justice in place, the relationship is enhanced. It is clear that all the three variables converged at the apex signifying that within the commercial banks in Nairobi County, talent management practices, and organizational justice forms part of the perceived sustainable competitive advantage. The figure suggests that talent management practices and organizational justice are important predictors of perceived sustainable competitive advantage. Besides, the interaction between talent management practices and organizational justice is also significant in explaining variability in perceived sustainable competitive advantage beyond the main effects.

CONCLUSION

Talent management is a critical driver of sustainable competitive advantage. However, the relationship between talent management and perceived sustainable competitive advantage is not solely determined by the effectiveness of talent management practices. Organizational justice plays a significant but a negative moderating role. The result indicates that organizational justice affects the direction and strength on the relationship between talent management practices and the perceived sustainable competitive advantage among commercial banks in Nairobi County in Kenya with a buffering effect as seen in the moderation mod graph. When employees perceive high levels of organizational justice, talent management practices are more likely to contribute to perceived sustainable competitive advantage. Conversely, low levels of organizational justice can undermine the impact of talent management practices. Therefore, organizations should strive to create a fair and just work environment to maximize the benefits of talent management and enhance their competitive advantage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, the chief executive officers (CEOs), human resource and bank managers should therefore be for people at the work place. More importantly, they need to get it right on talent management practices by being fair in employee recruitment, selection, placement, induction, training, development, performance management, succession planning and recognition. They should adopt the inclusive and a hybrid of inclusive & exclusive paradigm in selecting talented employees to the talent pool instead of relying on the exclusive paradigm which is widely criticized by employees. All employees should be treated as talented workers and not just the selected few, to consistently select high performers and high potential for talent management program or pool. The criteria of selecting talented employees must be transparent and communicated to all employees. Poor performers should be developed through training, coaching and mentorship. The new employees should be sourced and recruited through a competitive process with no form of canvassing and the new employees to be well trained before being deployed to work. There should be a career path for all employees. Coaching and mentorship should be carried out to all employees in an open and transparent manner. Secondly, commercial banks should ensure that talent management practices, such as reward systems and promotions, are perceived as fair and transparent. Clear criteria and performance-based evaluations can minimize perceptions of favoritism or bias. Thirdly, organizations should establish clear and consistent procedures for talent management processes, such as recruitment, selection, and performance evaluation. Involving employees in decision-making and providing explanations for decisions can enhance perceptions of procedural justice. Lastly, commercial banks should promote respectful and supportive interactions between employees and managers. Effective communication, feedback, and transparency can contribute to positive perceptions of interactional justice. In future research, analysis of the study variables can be done using other techniques as structural equation modeling (SEM). Moreover, studies could be done to incorporate other sectors rather than the banking.

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