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The contribution of Human Resource strategies to the Organizational Success; a case of Commercial Banks in Kisii County

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Abstract

Strategic Human Resource Management is the linkage between strategic management and human resource management; it is the set of managerial decisions and actions that determine the long term performance of an organization. It entails environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control. Strategic Human Resource Management offers a competitive advantage by building critical capabilities of Human Resources, strategic management in the organization facilitates strategy formulation and in policy implementation by providing competent human resources and competitive intelligence.

Strategic human resource planning introduces the aspect of a strategic plan; an important tool in determining whether an organization will have the skills and knowledge in place when it needs them. An effective strategic Human Resource management program will assist employees in using and developing skills and knowledge that will benefit the organization, the growth and self-esteem of its employees. Thus, Human Resource management is a vital tool in avoiding technological obsolescence.

With a heightened competition for customers and offering quality service commercial Banks in Kenya are searching for strategies to implement so as to align business objectives with employees. If such alignment is successful, an organization can accelerate workforce adaptation to change, improve cost-effectiveness of human resource decisions, and increase retention of the organization top achievers and this will go along way to assist in the general organizational performance.

KEY WORDS: Strategy, Efficiency, Human Resource, Performance

Introduction

Strategic human resource management has emerged as a major paradigm among scholars and practitioners in many parts of the world. This is apparent from the recent literature on international human resource management as well from recent reviews of trends in the U.S. (Kochan et al 1994) and the U.K (Lundy, 1994). Strategic Human resource management is spreading popularity owing much to an explicit promise of enhanced organizational effectiveness which can be achieved according to the dominant models, by developing internally consistent bundles of human resource management practices which are properly matched or linked to the extent and organizational contexts, most notably business strategies.

Watson Richard (1985) argues that the management of Human Resources has now assumed strategic importance in the achievement of organizational growth and excellence. As globalization advances and organization move into the information age, organizations need to adapt to the changes in technology and the changing issues in management of people. Some critical issues have clearly emerged in organizations' human resource planning, acquisition and development of human resources strategies, responding to the demands of the work place and, above all, evolving a strategy of dealing with industrial conflict. As a management practice, it covers all the conventional areas of personnel management and industrial relations, as well as the relatively new areas such as communication, counseling, training and development, and job enrichment (Watson Richard, 1985).

The organization has to develop its physical resource strategies, financial management strategies and its human resource strategies. Human Resources Strategies are therefore central to the delivery of the strategic objectives that has been developed covering the innovation in the delivery of all organization activities, externally focused on the markets and customers, commercially astute and growth driven. Arthur, J. (1994) observes that flexible and integrated promotion services equipped with responsive and efficient organizational structures, to achieve financial sustainability. This requires a strategic approach to organizational development, a clear integration between strategic goals and employee's values, beliefs and behaviours and strategic interventions focused clearly on the leadership and management of change.

Commercial banks are profit making financial institutions that play a significant role in the financial sector. Commercial banks offer a wide range of corporate financial services that address the specific needs of public/private enterprise. They provide deposit, loan and trading facilities and service investment activities in financial markets. The term commercial bank is used to differentiate day today profit oriented banks from investment banks, which are primarily engaged in the financial markets. Commercial banks are also differentiated from retail banks that cater to individual customers only (Kochan, et al. 1994). Commercial banks in Kenya play a number of roles in the financial stability and cash flow of the country's private sector. They process payments through a variety of means including telegraphic transfer, internet banking and electronic funds transfers. They also issue bank cheques and drafts, as well as accept money on term deposits. They act as moneylenders, by way of installment loans and overdrafts. Loan options include secured loans, unsecured loans and mortgage loans.

In today's competitive banking environment, exemplary customer service is one of the distinguishing characteristics that commercial banks can exploit to establish a competitive edge. Since most of the commercial banks offer comparable promotions and services, they continually search for a competitive advantage that will attract new customers and help them retain existing ones. They, therefore, endeavor to develop innovative programs and initiatives to maintain superior customer service levels while remaining profitable. These has led to commercial banks either downsizing or rightsizing themselves while continuously restructuring their operations in order to develop more cost effective and efficient operations (Lawler Edwards, 1992).

Statement of the problem

In today's intensely competitive and global financial marketplace, maintaining competitive advantage over other organization, organizations must recognize its financial position and create the capacity to invest in the delivery of human resource Strategy. The employees and managers face challenges in balancing delivery of operational plans, employing the best Human Resource strategy is an investment in the organizational capability which will contribute directly to the delivery of the organizational strategic objectives and heavy premium on having a highly committed or competent workforce.

When the human resource strategy is not applied to the whole organization and does not supports a general approach in the organization and is not concerned with longer term people issues and macro concerns about structure, quality, culture, values, commitment and matching resource to future needs. The strategy becomes obsolete in itself and application. The commercial banks in Kenya have introduced strategic Human resource management in the quest to retain highly qualified employees and have a high customer base. The study aims to investigate the contribution of strategic human resource management in the organizational success in the commercial banks in Kisii County.

Literature Review

Schuler Randy et al. (1993) observes that Strategic Human Resource Management sets out the general direction the Organization will follow to secure and develop its human resources to deliver a sustainable and successful Organization. Human Resource issues are becoming central to all strategic decision making level in the organization, the development of a culture that encourages all employees to be highly committed to the organization and its continuous improvement of trust, team working and willing cooperation making close supervision unnecessary with a consequential flattening of structural hierarchies.

Managing organizational change will require putting people at the top of the agenda, planning for enhanced employees performance must be a key element of the Human Resource Strategy, line managers play a pivotal role in winning hearts and minds.(Begin James, 1991) concurs that there needs to be a clear commitment from the top of the organization to engage and equip line managers in helping them to ensure their employees are committed to the change program, Communication with employees can be mechanical. Communication has to be meaningful as it is through 'conversations' something new is created and change is addressed. Strategic objectives have been identified for each theme and will be delivered through a number of supporting strategies some of which have been developed and others which will be formalized in accordance with an agreed plan. The human resource strategic themes are

attracting and recruitment, reward and recognition, learning and development, leadership, management of performance and employees engagement (Begin James, 1991)

Betcherman et al (1994) argues that Human Resource strategies are core in maximizing the potential talent of the employees, Human Resource strategies are interlinked and facilitate the delivery of the organizational goal and enhance organizational performance and Operational Plans. Organization and workforce must embrace strategic human resource planning in order to deliver the organizational success. Given the unique organizational profile and the challenges in attracting and developing the employees profile, Understanding the talent and their potential within the current employees when trying to recruit and select 'high flyers', Expanding the recruitment base to include the developing structured training programmes to support 'growing their own talent' Developing excellent Human Resource progression opportunities as a means of attracting and retaining key employees. (Betcherman et al. 1994) Developing appropriate strategies for the development of high potential individuals like the identification of talent pools. Using succession planning to identify future potential leaders for key positions and develop them accordingly also ensuring that equality and diversity is embedded in all stages of the talent management process.

Walton Richard (1985) observes that the competition for high quality middle and senior skills is likely to increase as organizations focus on communication, coaching and leadership skills as well as professional and technical skills. A human resource strategy should assist in developing succession planning policies that identify and develop employees to fill these roles. This needs to be linked to the leadership and management. Human Resource progression policies support the development and retention of key employees, the Organization needs to consider the identification of talent pools and develop tailored development policies to support that particular group. An increasingly diverse workforce with independent views about their lifestyles, requires well developed policies on work life balance. (Lundy olive, 1994) The flexible Working Strategy provides the opportunity to balance operational and individual requirements to enhance corporate performance through reduced absenteeism rates and increase employees motivation and job satisfaction. The leadership and management challenges of a flexible working environment are also recognized.

Lawler Edward (1992) argues that Organization need to develop a greater understanding of the markets and how to widen the potential pool of applicants. Aligning the recruitment and selection processes with Organization strategies and Organizational plans. Changing the resourcing policies to recruiting flexible pools of employees recognizing that some jobs will always require specialists, identifying and developing groups of jobs to enable potential successors to be identified for a variety of roles in developing talented administrators, each of whom is adaptable and capable of filling a number of roles. Developing long term work force planning models that inform recruitment and deployment plans. The development of strategies and policies to promote the Organization as an employer of choice and Human Resource progression policies that support flexible employee deployment.

Schuler, Randy & Jackson Susan (1987) defines Performance management strategies as a holistic process which brings together many of the elements that go to make up the talent management pipeline. The management of performance in the Organization needs therefore to be strategic and integrated with all other elements of the human resource Strategy and Organization operational plans. The Organization will develop its human resource information systems to support efficient performance management tools which are appropriate to the scale of the Organization's operations. The ability to invest at appropriate levels in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy is linked to achieving the Organization's income growth targets and creating the capacity for investment. Failure to deliver that investment capacity will inhibit the Organization's ability to support delivering the changes in culture, skills, competencies and behaviours needed to achieve its strategic growth objectives.

Why strategic Human Resource Management

Recruitment of right person on right job is a critical issue in domestic as well as marketing for the organization. In an organization, human resource manager is fully responsible for recruitment of right person. Because of different culture and religion, it is difficult to provide the required training and development programs to the employees at global level (Preffer Jeffrey, 1994). Managing talent is also a critical issue to address at international level due to high competition. Cultural change at global level create complication to manage skills and talent of diversify workforce to implement the strategies and plans in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives; It also affects the training and development programs of organization.

Presently, managing globalization is also a critical issue for human resource manager. Due to globalization and regular changes in technological and social environment, liberalization of trade policies and regulations, etc. it has become critical for human resource managers to cope with the competitive environment that affects the performance of organization at domestic as well as global platform. Managing demographic workforce is also an emerging issue for the organization and human resource department. At domestic and global level, there are many policies and regulation that affects the recruitment policy of an organization to manage people specially, aging workforce. Company's pension plan, retirement benefits for aging people are affected by the governmental policies (Lawler Edward, 1992). This is a very important and difficult challenge for human resource managers in recent times.

Managing organizational changes and culture at global level also creates the issues for organization and human resource department. In most of the time, organizational changes create conflicts between employees and management team that affects the culture of the organization (Kochan et al. 1994). So change management is an important emerging issue for the human resource managers. A best practice in strategic human resource management has invoked a great deal of interest among Human Resource professionals. Companies that are currently under-performing in the human resource area can learn and adopt some of the best practices from organizations that have acquired some mastery over the good practices in human resource. In the era of liberalization, the competitive scenario in the business environment has changed a lot. Consequently, human resource practices have also changed phenomenally. The performance of the employees determines the failure or the success of an organization.

Arthur Jeffrey, (1994) indicates that Multi-cultural workforce congregations have become today's workplace realities. The cross-border market terrorism spared by multi-national corporations evoked counter-insurgency and strategic warfare from domestic businesses. Partnering people in this race is vital for success in the market place. Workplaces have increasingly symbolized multi-cultural villages, resulting in a growing need for cross-cultural intelligence (Arthur Jeffrey, 1994) the future competitiveness of corporations will depend on their ability to attract and manage diverse talents effectively. Cross-cultural training will give managers on international assignments the cultural understanding essential to accomplish their tasks. Cross-cultural differences are the cause of failed negotiations and interactions, resulting in losses to the firms. The strategic role of human Resource Management in strengthening and sustaining corporate growth has assumed paramount significance, the world over.

Promotions and process alone can't help organizations to sustain loyal customers. They also need highly-motivated, dedicated and involved employees who are very passionate about their work and their organization; in short, they need "engaged employees". But, nurturing engaged employees requires a lot of effort and skill on the part of human resource managers and calls for a different human resource philosophy in the organization.

Lundy Olive (1994) states that the employee engagement to serve as a core competency of an organization that would provide sustainable competitive advantage. employee engagement towards their work, human Resource few test "symptoms", feeling of creating value, having a direction to follow, an air of trust, creating engaged employees human Resource top management endorsement, a work environment to cherish, innovative leadership and clear growth trajectories, 'one step up from commitment'. Employee engagement is the new buzzword. A successful business is directly linked to the commitment of its employees. Employee engagement ensures the successful execution of any business strategy.

The challenge before human resource professionals today is to create an enabling organizational climate for the employees, For this, they need to examine relevant issues such as training and development, performance appraisal and Human Resource planning in the organization. Selection and recruitment of personnel is an important responsibility of the human resource department (Walton Richard, 1985) the recruitment policy provides competitive remuneration as per industry norms, maintains high standards for selection of recruits, and encourages lateral induction to infuse fresh ideas and new skills in the organization.

Arthur Jeffrey (1994) insists that after successful selection and recruitment of manpower, it is essential that all employees undergo specific training programmes that help in maximizing their potential. Today's need is to place training and development at the heart of a business strategy. Training should be a continuous process keeping in view the changing market demands, the environment and the organizations' own culture. The role of a trainer, on the other hand, should be that of a mentor, facilitator and change agent. Assess the training needs of individuals who will be undergoing training, to avoid a mismatch with training programme. Provide a questionnaire to help the participants analyze their own capabilities. This includes their knowledge, skill, aptitude and attitude. Bring out the latent potential in people and channelize it towards the common goal of the organization. Design training programmes. Ensure that the

programme covers behavioral and cognitive leaning, focuses on up gradation of skills and encourages group participation. Include the real world programmes to solve the real life problems.

Performance appraisal is a process of assessing the capabilities, both known and hidden, of employees, so that their strengths and weaknesses can be determined for increasing the organizational effectiveness. The appraisal is for identifying, whether the employee is: Due for a promotion or reward or an increase in salary (Begin James, 1991) Capable of handling additional responsibilities or needs future training and development to upgrade their skills. Incapable of meeting the requirement and is, thus, dispensable. 360° feedback appraisal system is the formal performance appraisal system. In this system, the employee receives feedback from his manager, supervisor, peers and others, that he comes in contact with. It helps in increasing employee participation, makes the person feel more committed, increases his sense of ownership for company policies, and allows alignment of personal expectations with organizational goals; it helps in assessing the employee strengths and weaknesses (Begin James, 1991)

Research strategy

The study adopted a survey research design of all commercial banks in Kisii County to evaluate the contribution of strategic human resource management on service delivery. This type of study design enabled the researcher to single out a specific group of bank users to find out their view on the quality of service they receive from the commercial banks. The study was carried out among all the commercial banks in Kisii County. The study targets 300 bankers and customers in Kisii County which has nineteen (19) commercial banks. The target population for each commercial bank consisted of general manager, tellers, operation manager and the customers.

A sample comprising of 30% of the total population was taken. According to Kothari (2008) 30% is appropriate sample for descriptive studies. Thus with the target population of 500 respondents the researcher chose 150 calculated at a confidence level of 95%. Since the population of study was not homogeneous population, the researcher employed stratified random sampling technique to select respondents.

The strata comprised of the 19 commercial banks with different populations. Kothari (2008) mentions that stratified sampling technique were generally applied in a heterogeneous population in order to obtain a representative sample. Consequently, since the researcher intended to collect data from all the commercial banks within the area under study, each bank happens to have a different number of customers who are served by them.

The following formula was used to sample the population used for the study. The representative ration of each group was calculated to settle on the sample population in the study. This helped the researcher to distribute the target population representatively among the banks under study. This is indicated in the table below:

Banks	Total Population	Sample
1. KCB	59	18
2. Barclays Bank	47	14
3. K-Rep Bank	8	2
4. Equity Bank	74	22
5. Cooperative Bank	35	10
6. National Bank	24	7
7. Eco Bank	8	2
8. DTB Bank	11	3
9. SCB Bank	6	2
10. Family Bank	17	5
11. CFC Bank	14	4
12. Equity Keroka branch	56	17
13. KCB Keroka branch	42	13
14. Cooperative bank Keroka branch	16	5
15. KCB Nyamira branch	16	5
16. Equity Nyamira Branch	25	9
17. Family Bank Nyamira Branch	11	3
18. Cooperative bank Nyamira Branch	14	4
19. Barclays bank Nyamira	17	5
Total	500	150

The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire and an interview schedule. The questionnaire designed by the researcher consisted of close and open ended items. The close ended section evaluated the quality of strategic human resource management shown by services provided by the bank and the open ended section solicited to find respondents views on the possible ways of improving the quality of strategic human resource management to meet customers need. The interview schedule consisted of items administered among the banking personnel in charge of strategic human resource management in all the commercial banks in Kisii County.

To ascertain the validity of the instrument, questionnaire designed to tap information from the respondents' content validated by relevant the experts in research to test the Suitability of items and appropriateness of language will also be determined.

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher carried out a pilot study by using a test-retest method on 10 respondents from K-Rep Bank Kisii Branch. This population was not involved in the actual study. After the two administrations of the questionnaire, data collected from the field was analyzed through a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 11.5). Acceptable reliability was accepted at Alpha Coefficient of 0.5 and above. Relevant adjustment was made on the instrument by adjusting some questions which might seem ambiguous to the respondents and not giving a clear picture of the survey.

The data was collected coded, keyed into SPSS (Version 11.5) computer software database, organized and checked for any errors that could have occurred during data collection. The data was analyzed with the aid of the SPSS and Microsoft Excel 2007 computer software. Descriptive statistics were adopted for data analysis and presentation, total percentages, frequencies, bar graphs, pie chart to describe the data while chi- square and bringing in weighted average scale technique were used to analyze and interpret the data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.2.0 Respondents on Years worked in the organization

Most of the employees have worked in this organization for 0-2 years with 64% and the least 36% having worked for 3-10 years revealing that most employees have not worked in this organization for long.

Table 1

Years worked	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 2 yrs	96.0	64%
3 – 5 yrs	24.0	16%
6 – 10 yrs	15.0	10 %
Over 10 yrs	15.0	10 %
Total	150.0	100%

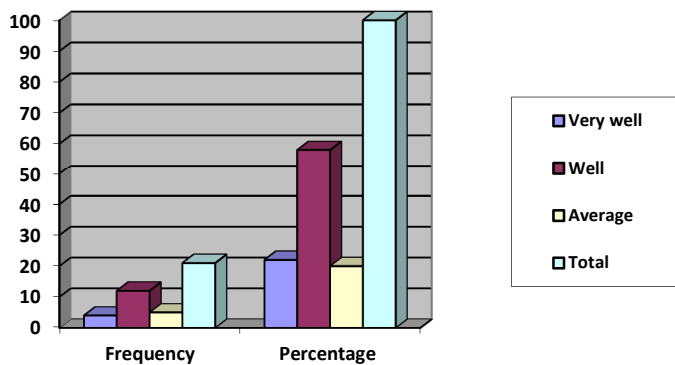
Source; Field Data, 2012

4.2.1 Respondents on Integration of Human Resource strategies

The research findings showed that the commercial Banks have integrated the Human Resource Strategies in their work place well indicated by 58 % because the organization knows the importance of the human Resource strategies.

Table 2

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	33.0	22.0
Well	87.0	58.0
Average	30.0	20.0
Total	150.0	100.0



Source; Field Data, 2012

The above table reveals that, 58% of the respondents suggested that the organization is using its strategies well to improve organizational performance, 22% said that the organization has been using the strategies very well. The least, 20% revealed that they averagely used the Human Resource strategies.

4.2.2 Extent of management’s involvement in HR Strategies Implementation

Respondents on the Level of management’s participation in Human Resource strategies Implementation. The extent to which the management are involved in Human Resource strategies implementation in the organization the respondents showed 82 % were of average and 3 % were of very High extend and 17.6% were of low extend revealing majority of the respondents were saying it has an average effect on service delivery.

Table 3 Extent of management’s involvement in HR Strategies Implementation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
High extent	3.0	2%
Average	123.0	82 %
Low extent	24.0	16 %
Very low extent	0.0	0.0%
Total	150.0	100%

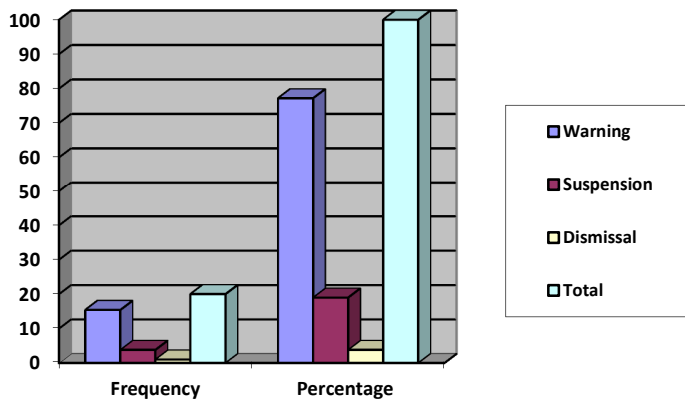
Source; Field survey (2012)

The above table reveals that, the existence of the mechanism in Human Resource strategies implementation that is all inclusive favoured by many respondents since activities that borders on Human strategies implementation like staff engagement rather than organizational, have a great impact on organizational performance, with majority response indicating that they were averagely involved in human resource strategy implementation with 82 % and the least with 2%. Indicated they were highly involved in implementation.

Respondents on the Strategies which are used to deal with Non conformity with Human Resource Strategies

Table 4.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Warning	114	76
Suspension	30	20.0
Dismissal	6	4
Total	150.0	100.0



Source; Field Data, 2012

It shows that the organization have been frequently using warning as a way of correcting non conformity to human resource strategies that the commercial banks introduce so that it can improve it performance. This is obtained by 76 % of the respondents view. Unless on serious occasions the suspension of employees is done on rare occasion when the organization has no otherwise to deal with non conformity the employees are dismissed it is equivalent to 20 % of the respondents view.

Table 5: Model Summary

R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of estimate	Change statistics				
				R square change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig F change
.918(a)	.843	.805	.51038	.843	1.242	4	36	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Strategic review, market strategy, Promotion strategy, Investment strategy
Dependent Variable: Commercial Bank competitiveness

Source: field study 2012

As shown in Table 5, none of the predictor variables had coefficient of correlation between themselves more than 0.5; hence all of them were included in the model. The analysis also indicated high correlation between the response and predictor variables. The Analysis shows that the coefficient of determination (R²) equals 0.843, that is, Strategic review, market strategy, Promotion strategy, Investment strategy explain 84.3 percent of Human resources competitiveness leaving only 15.7 percent unexplained. The P- value of 0.000 (Less than 0.05) implies that the model of Human resources competitiveness is significant at the 5 percent level of significance.

ANOVA

Table 6

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Regression	.852	4	.213	1.242	.000
Residual	6.173	36	.171		
Total	7.024	40			

Predictors: (Constant), Strategic review, market strategy, Promotion strategy, Investment strategy
Dependent Variable: commercial bank Performance

Source: Field study, 2012

A multiple regression model has been used to describe the relationship of Human Resource strategy and commercial bank competitiveness (Y) which depends on Market strategy (X1), Promotion strategy (X2), Investment strategy (X3) and Strategy review (X4). This is given by the equation;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e_i$$

where e is the error term

Findings (P- value of 0.00) shows that there is correlation between the predictor's variables (Strategic review, market strategy, Promotion strategy, Investment strategy) and response variable (commercial bank competitiveness) the estimated multiple linear regression equation was found to be:

$$Y = 0.260 + 0.131X_1 + 0.170X_2 + 0.051X_3 + 0.048X_4$$

Model Elasticity

Constant = 0.260, shows that if Strategic review, Market strategy, Promotion strategy, Investment strategy were all rated as zero, Commercial Bank competitiveness would be 0.260. X1= 0.131, shows that one unit change in Market strategy results in 0.131 units increase in Commercial Bank competitiveness. X2= 0.170, shows that one unit change in Promotion strategy results in 0.170 units increase in Commercial Bank competitiveness. X3= 0.051, shows that one unit change in Investment strategy results in 0.051 units increase in Commercial Bank competitiveness. X4= 0.048, shows that one unit change in Strategic review results in 0.048 units increase in Commercial Bank competitiveness.

Table 7: Coefficients of Regression Equation

		Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized Coefficients	t	sig
		B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant		.260	.460		0.565	.231
Marketing strategy	X1	.131	.048	.254	2.729	.001
Promotion strategy	X2	.170	.045	-.300	3.778	.0000
Investment strategy	X3	.051	.023	.113	2.217	.0002
Strategy review	X4	.048	.022	.093	2.182	.0000

Source; Field Data, 2012

Conclusion

The study used regression analysis to investigate the association between Human Resource strategies on the commercial bank performance, Promotion strategy, Market strategy, Investment strategy, Strategic review and Commercial Bank competitiveness which was found significant (with R², 84.3). It was established that the relationship between Commercial bank competitiveness and Promotion strategy was strong at 75.2; moderately strong with Marketing at 53.6; moderately weak with Investment strategy at 46.7 and weak with the Strategic review at 30.7. The R² of 84.3. All the independent variables were found to be linearly related with the dependent variable thus a model of four predictor variables could be used to rate Commercial Bank competitiveness. The significant relationship that was established between Commercial bank competitiveness and the strategies under investigation, which was similar to findings by other scholars such as Kochan et al (1994) the traditional functions of Human Resource Manager now need to be strategically directed towards developing and sustaining organizational capabilities, human resource activities that overlap with traditional business functions such as finance, marketing, and non-traditional activities, such as knowledge management.

Human resource strategies play a virtual role and help the communications process in the organization. Most importantly, organizations can hire and retain the top performers, improve productivity and enhance job satisfaction of the employees. Human Resource Management has the responsibility to maximize efficiency and profit, but in the emerging scenario, the role of human resource manager is changing rapidly due to changes in government policies, unions, labour legislations and technology. The trends have taken place in the organization, human resource planning, job design, motivation, and recruitment and skill development and employee relations.

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