

ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCE DYNAMIC CAPABILITY ON SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS A SURVEY OF SACCOS IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA

Caroline Waithira Kagwi

School of Business and Economics, Kenya Methodist University, Nyeri, Kenya

apecarol@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research examined why Human Resource Dynamic Capability was a critical issue for organization's Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Human Resource Dynamic Capability management in a simple model, and identifies the business risks of not taking this approach. Identified why some organizations find it difficult to take this approach, and later it provided some practical advice for both chief executives and HR directors. Sustainable Competitiveness dealt with improving a company's performance and individual development of its employees. The general objective of the study was to investigate the Contribution of Human Resource Dynamic Capability to the Sustainable Competitiveness. The target population was HR managers, Branch managers, Operational managers and Head of the following departments that was Administration, Accounts, FOSA, Marketing/Microfinance, I.T, and Loans (BOSA) in SACCOS in Meru County, Kenya. The sample size was 120 respondents obtained from the selected 12 SACCOS in Meru County in respect to accessibility and convenience in research. The data was collected though administered questionnaires both Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data. Logistic regression was used, data was edited, coded, classified and summarized and presented in form of tables, pie charts and graphs into categories. The key findings of the study are, rare Human resource Dynamic capability have a positive contribution towards sustainable competitiveness, Valuable Human Resource Dynamic Capability has a positive attribute too, non-imitable Human Resource Dynamic Capability and Imperfect Substitution of Human Resource Dynamic Capability these also have a positive contribution towards organizations' sustainable competitiveness.

Keywords: Human Resource, Dynamic Capability, Sustainable Competitiveness, Competitive Advantage, Cost Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Dynamic Capability management was advancement on traditional or administrative HRM (Human Resource Management), which evolved significantly from the late-20th into the early-21st century. Strategic HRM centers on the idea of aligning your company's Human Resource Dynamic Capability management processes with the mission and goals of the company (Neil, 2007).

Traditionally, Human Resource Dynamic Capability had been a largely administrative function within an organization. Its emphasis had been on basic components of managing employees including compensation, training and motivation programs. Historically, HRM functioned without much alignment to broader organizational goals. HR professionals were involved in developing employee programs intended to properly compensate employees, while complying with all legal factors involved in hiring and employing people (Lewin, 2008).

Strategic HRDC is difficult but worthy of management's attention across all levels of an organization. It is not just a lower-level task. Part of the difficulty of effective strategy is due to the obstacles or impediments to it. These include the longer time frames needed for, the need for involvement of many people in the strategy process, conflicts with the organizational power structure, poor or inadequate sharing of information, unclear responsibility and accountability in the process and an inability to manage change, including cultural change. For successful strategic on development of an organization, an organization needs a model or a set of guidelines outlining the entire process and relationships among key decisions or actions. A "roadmap" is needed to help with the order of execution decisions as management confronts obstacles and takes advantage of opportunities (Hrebiniak, 2005).

Realizing HRDC objectives implies that there has to be proper strategy outlines, many strategies are not realized in organizations due to poor implementation (Bourne, 2010). Strategy outline happen to be a more challenging and delicate task than that of strategy formulation. Many strategies fail because the plans are not translated into measures that managers and employees understand and use in their daily work. Many organizations both in public and private come up with excellent strategies but very few set to implement them. This is largely attributed to the fact that delicate and sensitive issues were involved in the strategy development (Bourne, 2010).

Statement of the problem

Most of the organizations just focused on profit maximization goal and failed to identify the necessary supporting aspects that were mainly geared by Human Resource Dynamic Capability (HRDC). An organization may invest a lot on the machines and buildings but without HRDC

then the goals might not be achieved. In the past, management of many cooperative societies in Africa was a great cause for worry. The institutions were so badly operated, resulting into the collapsed of many SACCOS. Vices, such as nepotism, greed, conflict of interests, over politicization were common practice. To date, we are able to witness some levels of acceptable progress in terms of how SACCO matters are managed and made to grow (Agumba, 2009). SACCOS in Meru County have adopted Strategic HRDC in their daily activities since its operational to cater to the specific needs of SACCOS in Meru County. The Operationalization was in two parts, part 1 was the performance plan which took into account the perspectives of financial, customer, internal business process, learning and growth, and CSR. Part 2 took into account the mitigating factors/areas of development (Nicholas, 2009).

There was recognition that there was still a need for further research on contribution achieved by Human Resource Dynamic Capability on organization's Sustainable Competitiveness. Little research was available on HRDC in the SACCOs. Thus this study highlighted how SACCOS in Meru County were applying the Human Resource Dynamic Capability to Sustainable Competitiveness at large as well as to improve strategy implementation (Sharma, 2010).

Research Objectives

- i. To establish how Valuable Human Resource Dynamic Capability lead to Sustainable Competitiveness.
- ii. To determine the relationship between Rare Human Resource Dynamic Capability and Sustainable Competitiveness.
- iii. To investigate role played by Non-imitable Human Resource Dynamic Capability on Sustainable Competitiveness.
- iv. To find out if imperfect substitutable Human Resource Dynamic Capability are a mean to retention of Sustainable Competitiveness.

Hypothesis

H₀; Valuable Human Resource Dynamic Capability do not lead to Sustainable Competitiveness.

H₀; There is no relationship between Rare Human Dynamic Capability and Sustainable Competitiveness.

H₀; Non- imitable Human resource Dynamic Capability do not play major role on Sustainable Competitiveness.

H₀; imperfect substitutable Human resource Dynamic Capability is not a mean to retention of Sustainable Competitiveness.

Scope of the study

The study was a survey on all companies Sacco's in Meru, Kenya. The target population was HR managers, Branch managers, Operational managers and Head of the following departments that was Administration, Accounts, FOSA, Marketing/Microfinance, I.T, and Loans (BOSA) in SACCOS in Meru County. The sample size was 120 respondents obtained from the selected 12 SACCOS in Meru County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dynamic Capability Theory

Dynamic capability theory examines how firms integrate, build, and reconfigure their internal and external firm-specific competencies into new competencies that match their turbulent environment. The theory assumes that firms with greater dynamic capability will outperform firms with smaller dynamic capability. The aim of the theory is to understand how firms use dynamic capability to create and sustain a competitive advantage over other firms by responding to and creating environmental changes (Teece, 2007). Capability are a collection of high-level, learned, patterned, repetitious behaviors that an organization can perform better relative to its competition. Organizational capability are called “zero-level” (or “zero-order”) capability, as they refer to how an organization earns a living by continuing to sell the same product, on the same scale, to the same customers (Winter, 2008).

The resource-based view/Theory of competitive advantage

Over the last twenty years, protagonists of the resource-based view of competitive advantage have produced an increasing amount of empirical research substantiating their espoused theories that the resources and capability of the firm are the foundation for its long-term strategy because of two premises. First, internal resources and capability are viewed as the key competitive sources of a firm's strategy; and secondly, the majority of the firm's superior returns are derived from these (Chamberlin, 2009).

The resource-based view defines competitive advantage as when a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors. This assumes a firm's competition includes all current competitors, but also, potential competitors. Within this definition, a firm can create short run competitive advantage or first-mover advantage (Barney, 2010). However, it is not sustainable because other competitors may be able to imitate or purchase the sources of the advantage (Amit & Schoemaker, 20011). Sustained competitiveness is achieved when a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and

when these other firms are imperfectly able to imitate the benefits of this strategy (Barney,2010).Firm resources are defined as including “all assets, capability, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc. controlled by a firm that enable it to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” These are categorized as physical Capital resources, human Capital resources, organizational Capital resources and financial resources, technological resources, and reputation (Amit& Schoemaker, 2011).

To sustain competitive advantage from a firm’s idiosyncratic resources, Derrick& Cool (2009) propose the notion of asset stock accumulation. They argue that if resources are freely available on an open strategic factor market, as proposed by Barney (2006), then anyone can attain the resource and potentially use it to achieve the same/or better results, unless the resource is limited by supply. Conversely, a more favorable approach to Sustainable Competitiveness is the use of intangible (or tacit) resources that are generally built rather than bought (Derrick& Cool, 2009).Strategic assets are the cumulative result of adhering to a set of consistent policies over a period of time, that is, strategic asset stocks are accumulated by choosing appropriate time paths of flows over a period of time For example, a reputation for quality may be built (rather than bought) by following a consistent set of production, quality control etc. policies over some period of time (Derrick& Cool, 2009). It is proposed that Human Resource Dynamic Capability is a strategic asset capable of providing or contributing to a firm’s competitive advantage (Barney & Wright, 2009). To have the potential of sustained competitive advantage, the resource-based view proposes that a firm must have four attributes: valuable resources; rare resources; imperfectly imitable resources; and no substitutability of resources (Conner & Prahalad, 2006).

Empirical literature review

Donald and Harold Doty (2005) in their journal article, The Effects of Flexibility in Employee Skills, Employee Behaviors, and Human Resource Dynamic Capability Practices on Firm Performance, hypothesize that flexibility of employee skills, employee behaviors, and HR practices represent critical sub dimensions of HR flexibility and are related to superior firm performance. Results based on perceptual measures of HR flexibility and accounting measures of firm performance support this prediction. Whereas skill, behavior, and HR practice flexibility are significantly associated with an index of firm financial performance, the authors find that only skill flexibility contributes to cost-efficiency.

Rebecca and Patrick (2010) in their work, The Impact of High Performance Human Resource Dynamic Capability Practices on Employees' Attitudes and Behaviors, states that

although Human Resource Dynamic Capability Dynamic Capability (HRDC) research has established a significant relationship between high-performance HR practices and firm-level financial and market outcomes, few studies have considered the important role of employees' perceptions of HR practice use or examined the more proximal outcomes of high-performance HR practices that may play mediating roles in the HR practice–performance relationship.

Society for Human Resource Dynamic Capability (2008) argued that its functional areas, encompassing responsibilities from recruitment and staffing to compensation and benefits or training and development. The Human Resource Dynamic Capability profession has evolved during the past 20 years and continues to change, from the collective demographics of HR professionals and the ways that practitioners enter the profession to the functions and roles they serve as HR and the value they brings to organizations. Mark and Brian (2010) in their journal article Bridging Micro and Macro Domains: Workforce Differentiation and Human Resource Dynamic Capability Dynamic Capability, points out that a focus on strategic capability and strategic jobs as the focal point of workforce management system design represents a significant potential source of value creation for most firms.

Song Chang (2012) in the journal Article Flexibility-Oriented HRDC Systems, Absorptive Capacity, and Market Responsiveness and Firm Innovativeness, states that although market responsiveness and firm innovativeness are important aspects of firm performance, little is known about which Human Resource Dynamic Capability management (HRDC) systems foster these performance aspects and how. Building on prior research, we delineate flexibility-oriented Human Resource Dynamic Capability management (FHRDC) systems in terms of resource- and coordination-flexibility-oriented HRDC subsystems.

Hao-chieh and Chih Ting (2008) in their journal How Executive HRDC System Links to Firm Performance indicates that Top management team (TMT) social integration and action aggressiveness are identified as internal-oriented and external-oriented capability, respectively, for a teamwork-oriented executive HRDC system to support in enhancing firm performance. Ram et al (2009) in their article on Why Sustainability Is Now the Key Driver of Innovation, explains that the quest for sustainability is already starting to transform the competitive landscape, which will force companies to change the way they think about products, technologies, processes, and business models. The key to progress, particularly in times of economic crisis, is innovation. Just as some internet companies survived the bust in 2010 to challenge incumbents, so, too, will sustainable corporations emerge from today's recession to upset the status quo. By treating sustainability as a goal today, early movers will develop competencies that rivals will be hard-pressed to match. That competitive advantage will stand them in good stead, because sustainability will always be an integral part of development.

Jay Barney, (2010) in the journal article Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage, Points out that understanding sources of sustained competitive advantage has become a major area of research in strategic management. Building on the assumptions that strategic resources are heterogeneously distributed across firms and that these differences are stable over time, this article examined the link between firm resources and sustained competitive advantage and four empirical indicators of the potential of firm resources to generate sustained competitive advantage were identified as value, rareness, limitability, and substitutability.

According to Tara Duggan and Demand Media (2006) in their article about HRDC: Theory & Principles outlines that to be effective in the global marketplace, Human Resource Dynamic Capability departments increasingly must act as a strategic partner with other organizations in the company. Recruiting, interviewing and hiring the right personnel to produce quality products and services depend on good communication between managers in all branches of the business. The theories and principles associated with strategic HR management involve aligning all HR activities to the company's goals and objectives. By ensuring that all functions, such as marketing, finance, manufacturing and sales, get the right resources, the HR department enables the company's long-term success.

Chaharbaghi and Lynch 2009, p. 45, Song et al., 2009, p. 86). Their writings explained that in order to sustain the competitive advantage, it is crucial to develop resources that will strengthen the firm's ability to continue the superior performance. Any industry or market reflects high uncertainty and, in order to survive and stay ahead of competition, new resources become highly necessary. Morgan (2010 cited by Finney et al.2009, p. 1722) agrees, stating that the need to update resources is a major management task since all business environments reflect highly unpredictable market and environmental conditions. The existing winning edge needed to be developed since various market dynamics may make existing value-creating resources obsolete.

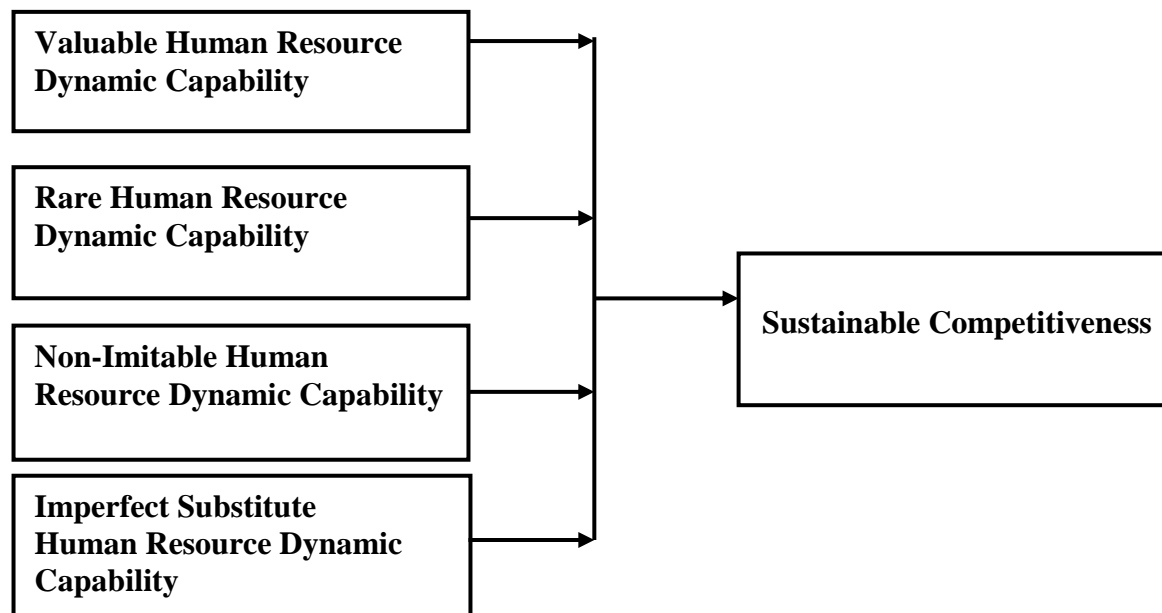
Cobbold and Lawrie (2009) stated that a well stipulated HRDC strategy not only enables organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. It provides feedback around both the internal business processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. When fully deployed, the balanced scorecard transforms strategic planning from an academic exercise into the nerve center of an enterprise.

Wright et al. (2010) Journal of Management outlines that the RBV has proven to be integral to the conceptual and theoretical development of the HRDC literature. Our brief review demonstrates how the RBV based HRDC research has evolved in the last decade. This

evolution began when HR researchers recognized that the RBV provided a compelling explanation for why HR practices lead to competitive advantage.

As part of Journal of Management's Yearly Review of Management issue, Wright and McMahan (1992) reviewed the theoretical perspectives that had been applied to HRDC. They presented the RBV as one perspective that provided a rationale for how a firm's human resources could provide a potential source of Sustainable Competitiveness.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used descriptive research design. Descriptive research was concerned with describing the characteristics of particular individuals or group by extracting information from the respondent. The target population was HR managers, Branch managers, Operational managers and one employee in each of the following departments that is Administration, Accounts, FOSA, Marketing/Microfinance, I.T, and Loans (BOSA) in SACCOS in Meru County. The research conducted through a survey. This resulted to having a sample of 12 SACCOS in Meru County, totaling to a sample of 120 respondents. Stratified sampling was used as the selection was done randomly within target groups and the questionnaires were sent to all 120 respondents. These respondents were the HR managers, branch managers, Operational managers and the Head of the following departments that is Administration, Accounts, FOSA, Marketing/Microfinance, I.T, and Loans (BOSA) in the SACCOS in Meru County. Purposive sampling method was used where 36 managers and 84 employees that were selected

randomly. These respondents were issued with questionnaire. The instrument of data collection was thorough self-administered questionnaires which were used to collect primary data while secondary data was obtained through internal publications such as the strategic plan. The researcher took the questionnaires to the respondents and clarification was done where it was necessary in order to obtain the right information. In this study both descriptive analysis and inferential analyses were used to analyze the data. Logistic regression was used to show the relationship between the Human resource dynamic capability and sustainable competitiveness as all variables were significant.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Response Rate

The target population of this study was employees of selected SACCOs in Meru County. A total of 120 respondents were considered for the study though the researcher response rate of participants which the researcher found significant for the study was 94 respondents who successfully filled the questionnaires.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response rate	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Responded.	94	78%
Did Not respond.	26	22%
Totals	120	100%

Testing Hypothesis

An investigation was done on individual variables and its contribution towards sustainable competitiveness in an organization and outcome of the results are as indicated in the table 2.

Table 2: Testing Hypothesis results

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Valuable Human Resource Dynamic Capability	.125	.884	1.020	1	.318	1.433
Rare Human Resource Dynamic Capability	.816	.446	3.007	1	.439	2.706
Non-Imitable Human Resource Dynamic	1.472	.574	6.569	1	.010	4.358
Imperfect substitute Human Resource Dynamic Capability	1.653	.682	8.125	1	.029	5.410

The Valuable Human resource Dynamic capability has a positive contribution towards sustainable competitiveness, Rare Human Resource Dynamic Capability has a positive attribute too, the non-imitable of Human Resource Dynamic Capability and the Imperfect substitute of Human Resource Dynamic Capability they also have a positive contribution towards organizations' sustainable competitiveness. This is to conclude that all the variables tested had a positive contribution towards sustainable competitiveness and therefore they are key and important variables in Human Resource Dynamic Capability that ought to be strengthened.

The significance level set for testing was at 0.05 so anything above this was considered to be insignificant. In respect to the results obtained after the logistic regression it is clear that the Valuable human resource dynamic capability is significant as the significant level was 0.318 and being below the set level of 0.05 therefore it is significant. The odd's ratio (Exp B) indicates if Valuable HRDC is increased by 1 then sustainable competitiveness in an organization would go up by 2.7 times thus I accept the Alternative hypothesis and rejected the null Hypothesis.

The Rare HRDC is also significant at a significance level of 0.439 which is below the set level of 0.05 and thus also significant in sustainable competitiveness the odd's ratio (Exp B) indicates the likelihood of the outcome when Rare HRDC is increased sustainable competitiveness by 1 is likely to increase by 1.4 times hence I accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null Hypothesis.

The non-imitable HRDC is significant in the organization gaining sustainable competitiveness at 0.010. The odd's ratio (Exp B) indicates the likelihood of the outcome in that if the non-imitable HRDC is increased by 1 then Sustainable Competitiveness in the organization is likely to increase in a rate of 4.4 times. The non-imitability in human resource is significant in sustainable competitiveness and therefore ways of improving the value of HR is vital to SCA. Therefore I accepted the alternative Hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. The imperfect substitutable HRDC is also significant in respect to the outcome at a significance level of 0.029. the odd's ratio (Exp B) shows that the likelihood of outcome in case the imperfect substitutability of HRDC is increased by 1 then the organization will be likely to increase sustainable competitiveness by 5.0 times. This is to conclude that organizations should work on improving the HR to an aspect of imperfect substitutability so as to gain SCA. Hence I accepted the alternative Hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis.

Sustainable Competitiveness in an Organization

Logistic regression was used to regress the contribution of Human Resource Dynamic Capability on sustainable competitiveness in an organization and the variables that were regressed to analyze their contribution in sustainable competitiveness as dependent variable

were abilities and skills in Human resource, the competence level in Human resource, value addition in Human resource and the quality of Human resource.

Table 3: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log Likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Adjusted R	Nagelkerke Square
1	100.660a	.866	.823	.349

The overall strength of the model was assessed using the Cox & Snell Pseudo R² as shown in the table 4.8.1. The R² is at 0.866, this means that the model could account for 86.6% of the observed sustainable competitiveness and the adjusted R was at .823. This translates that the model was strong enough in predicting sustainable competitiveness and therefore it means that the variables in question were significant as the model indicates in their contribution towards sustainable competitiveness.

SUMMARY

The researcher investigated whether Valuable HRDC leads to achievement of sustainable competitiveness. From the research findings, it was found that, majority of the 76 (80.9%) said yes and 18 (19.1%) said no. This hence indicates that Valuable HRDC Contributes to Sustainable Competitiveness. This has been supported by Rebecca and Patrick 2010 in their journal, *The Impact of High Performance Human Resource Dynamic Capability Practices on Employees' Attitudes and Behaviors*, states that although Human Resource Dynamic Capability Dynamic Capability (HR) management research has established a significant relationship between high-performance HR practices and firm-level financial and market outcomes, few studies have considered the important role of employees' perceptions of HR practice use or examined the more proximal outcomes of high-performance HR practices that may play mediating roles in the HR practice–performance relationship.

Rare HRDC on Sustainable Competitiveness

To establish how rare HRDC Contribute to the Sustainable Competitiveness, these was investigated and the findings showed that most of the respondents 79 (84%) agreed that Rare HRDC contribute to sustainable competitiveness while 15 (16%) had a no opinion of their contribution. This is in line with a research on Human Resource Dynamic Capability being source of sustained competitive advantage congruent with according to Aliaga, (2010) criteria; they must provide value to the firm. Further Steffy and Maurer (2008) provide an economic-

based theoretical proposition that both the demand and supply of labour are heterogeneous in that firms require different jobs that require different skills, and that individuals differ in both the types and level of their idiosyncratic skills.

Non-imitable HRDC contribution to Sustainable Competitiveness

The researcher investigated whether non-imitable HRDC contribute to Sustainable Competitiveness it was found that majority 64 (68.1%) said yes and 30 (31.9%) said no, as earlier illustrated that a resource must be incomparable to be a source of sustained competitive advantage hence , for Human Resource Dynamic Capability to be imitated, competitors must be able to identify the exact source of the human Capital pool that provides the advantage, the competitor must be able to duplicate exactly both the relevant components of the human Capital resource pool and the circumstances under which these resources function (Zahra et al, 2011).

Imperfect substitutable HRDC as a means to retention of Sustainable Competitiveness

The researcher investigated on whether imperfect substitutable HRDC has a Contribution on Sustainable Competitiveness of the SACCOs. An investigation was done and it was found that majority of the respondents 63 (67%) stated that it had a contribution, 31 (33%) said it had no contribution. This serves as a support to an indicated fact that if a resource is to derive sustained competitive advantage it must to have quality HR that has no substitutes. Imperfect substitutability requires that there must be no strategically equivalent valuable resources that are themselves either not rare or imitable. If alternative resources are either not rare or imitable, then other firms will be able to conceive and implement similar strategies from the resource, nullifying the existence of competitive advantage (Barney, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The concept of Dynamic Capability (DCs) in the Resource Based View of the firm has gained rapid recognition as a potential source of achieving and sustaining competitive advantage in organizations. DCs have been identified as change agents that allow organizational development and renewal of their capability enabling them to respond to changes in external environments and gain sustainable competitiveness and renew resources.

While the DCs concept has been found to be a significant source of competitive advantage, the process through which organizations develop DCs is lacking empirical investigation. The research reported in this paper empirically explores the contribution HRDCs on Sustainable Competitiveness and creates a room for more researchers. Research exploring on DCs drew on findings from different streams of literature such as product innovation, supplier

relationships, human resources, and marketing. (Teece et al, 2007). Recruitment, acquisition, strategic decision-making and alliancing are key elements in HRDCs. The applicability of these conceptual theories and frameworks in conducting extensive empirical research into the effects of DCs on firm performance has been questioned primarily due to the vague nature of the concepts that underpin them and the differing levels of analysis that these theories draw upon (Jantunen, 2002).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The data highlighted that contribution of HRDCs on creativity and innovativeness; organizations need people with appropriate expertise and skills that have a high level of creativity. To achieve this, the participating companies frequently carry out a large number of HR activities and the type of activities used includes recruitment, people development and training.

The participating companies bring in new people with expertise, skill and high level of creativity through recruitment. Recruitment approaches vary from hiring graduates and postgraduates to specialist, domain experts and recognized industrial experts from universities and recruitment markets. Also, staff is rotated across different departments. The types of people recruited were identified as top end graduates, very bright, very intelligent and renowned experts with specialist and generalist skills. (Martin 2000)

The second type of HR activity relate to people development. These include identification of potential highfliers or talents, personal development and career development activities. The intensity of people development activities goes right across the whole company; staff at all levels is developed all the way through their career through continuous skills and personal development. This was emphasized in all SACCOs and has really contributed to competitiveness.

The third type of HR activity used is training. The types of training programmes used are induction programmes, process-based learning, management development programmes, leadership training, internet based training, tool box, on the job training, technical learning, graduate training programmes and big demonstration programmes. In order for HRDC to be effective on innovativeness, these training programmes had to be available and also relevant to the operations of the business.

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