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Abstract

There is no clearer time in the current generation that has demonstrated the significance of human capital in the world of work than in 2020 after the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) disease struck and eventually declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020). Governments across the world took up strict measures in a bid to tame spread of the highly infectious disease including initiating curfews and lockdowns. As a result, businesses, schools, factories and many institutions closed shop or reduced their operations significantly. Consequently, many companies have been left with buildings and infrastructure with no one to attend to them as most workers are quarantined or under lockdown in their homes, while others were asked to work from home. CEOs and managers have come to the appreciation of the fact that even with the most advanced machinery, seamless processes or well written policies and strategies, without the human resource to make use them for production then they remain unproductive with no income generation. With selected examples of best practices from various companies, this paper reflects on the importance of soft model of human resource management (HRM) in an organization.

Keywords: *HRM model, Human capital & Organizational performance*

Soft HRM Model: Human Capital as the Greatest Asset for Organizational Performance

Human Resource (HR) practices are the roots which define and hold together the basis upon which human capital functions in an organization. Compared to products or processes, human capital has been determined to be one of the most important assets in an organization in order to ensure the best health and profitability of that organization, with sustained competitive advantage (Rana & Malik, 2017). A happy and contented worker is sure to give their best into a company while a disgruntled and unhappy employee would not function optimally. Such a disgruntled worker will always be looking for an exit way out of the company, leading to an ineffective functioning and performing firm because everybody's effort and input count towards the overall success and good performance of an organization. Human resource managers are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that an organization attracts and retains the best skilled and talented workforce, workers who should be effectively utilized to strategically add value that organization. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) postulate that human resource management (HRM) is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in an organization, covering the activities of HRM, human capital management, knowledge management, corporate social responsibility, organization development, resourcing, learning and development, performance and reward management, employee relations, employee well-being and the provision of employee services.

Human Resource Practices

Organizational performance relates to the well-being of an organization in as far as its triple bottom line of profits, people and planet is concerned. It is every company's business to make sure that they perform well, maintain profitability and maximize the shareholder's wealth. In order for an organisation to function, then there must be human beings available and engaged to see that production happens and at full capacity. Without human beings, be they managers providing leadership, accountants overseeing the financial soundness or cleaners to ensure that everybody works in a clean and safe environment, then there would not be an organization existing in the first place since work cannot perform by itself. It is therefore of utmost importance that stakeholders in an organization realise the importance of the human capital and greatly take care of them and their well-being. Rana and Malik (2017) in their study established that HR practices including selection, training, compensation, performance appraisal and employee participation were significantly and positively related to organizational performance. Due to excessive focus on profits, business organizations miss the fact that adherence to basic principles in as far as human resources are concerned is an obligation and not a choice, which is not only from ethical, religious or social point of view, but it is also important from the long term perspective of business interest (Rana & Malik, 2017). Christianity as well as other religions advocate for fairness, justice and equality in how a person treats the other and castigates any forms of ill-treatment and

discrimination. For instance, Jesus Christ taught His disciples to “love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Matthew 22:39). Organizations ought to be guided by this basic principle in the manner that they treat their workforce. In its Global Compact, the United Nations (UN) recognizes the fact that business sustainability is achievable when an organization has a principled approach to doing business, including taking care of its labour or human capital and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the workplace (UN Global Compact, 2020).

HRM has various objectives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014) geared towards supporting an organization to achieve its overall goals. It should ensure that HR policies and strategies are developed and integrated with the business strategy of the organization and also contribute to the development of a high performance organizational culture. It is the responsibility of HRM not only to ensure that an organization attracts, employs and retains the right, talented, skilled and engaged personnel it needs to excel, but also create a positive employment relationship between all staff members with a climate of mutual trust. At the heart of HRM should be the application of an ethical approach to people management. Ogochi (2018) submits that by upholding ethical and moral values leaders can nurture mutual trust amongst themselves and with their followers in an organization.

The Harvard model of HRM stresses the importance of viewing people as potential assets rather than merely variable costs to the organization, noting that HRM involves all management decisions and actions that affect the nature and relationship between the organization and its workforce (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Proponents of this model argue that HRM should lead to employee commitment and the fulfilment of many employee needs should be taken as a goal in itself and not merely as a means to an end (Edgar & Geare, 2005). The European model goes further and provides a more holistic approach as it encourages dialogue between social partners, it emphasizes on social responsibility, enables participation in decision making and it also provides an environment which encourages continuous learning. Whichever model or practice of HRM an organization adopts, it is important for HR managers to institutionalize a more proactive than reactive approach to HR matters in order to be able to cope with the various challenges posed by the 21st century including globalization (Nasir, 2017).

HRM: The Soft Model

Scholars often describe HRM as a concept with two distinct forms; the soft form and the hard form. For many HR practitioners, although their desired model for any organization is the soft one, however the reality in most organizations is that the hard model is practiced more than the desired one, which goes to demonstrate that the interests of the organization take priority place over the interests of the individuals working there in (Gratton, Hailey, Stiles, & Truss, 2011). Storey in 1989 differentiated between the soft and hard forms of HRM (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014) noting that the hard version emphasis on “the quantitative, calculative and business-strategic aspects of managing human resources in as rational a way as for any other economic factor” (p.

10). Clearly the hard model of HRM concentrates its efforts on maximizing the profits while the people take the second place of priority. On the other side, the soft version provides a more humane touch emphasizing on factors like communication, motivation and leadership as most crucial. Some scholars however view the two approaches as complementary to each other instead of being mutually exclusive. To differentiate between the two forms, the question to answer is whether the emphasis in an organization is placed on people thus soft form or whether it is placed on the resources and processes, insinuating hard form of HRM. According to Truss, Gratton, Hope-Hailey, McGovern, and Stiles (1997), soft HRM is associated with the human relations movement, the use of individual talents and McGregor's Theory Y perspective on individuals.

In David McGregor's Theory Y, without any coercion employees can be motivated to work hard and find work enjoyable. Given the opportunity they are capable of self-direction, self-control, will seek to grow and accept responsibility and end up being a source of many useful ideas to the organization (Kopelman, Prottas, & Falk, 2010). On the contrary, McGregor's Theory X reflects a negative view of workers terming them as lazy, people who are incapable of self-direction and autonomous work behaviour, and they have little to offer when it comes to solving problems or decision making in the organization (Kopelman, Prottas, & Davis, 2008). This latter theory seems very harsh and obviously any organization exercising it would perhaps not expect workers to be motivated towards their work because of low morale and low self-esteem. This would cause them not give their one hundred percent in terms of performance and in effect negatively impact the performance and bottom line of the organization. Theory X compared to Theory Y is therefore a lose-lose model for both the organization as well as the employees.

Edgar and Geare (2005) observe that in theory, soft HRM model is to fulfil the needs of employees as an end in itself, with the favourable attitudes generated from the use of appropriate HRM practices coupled with communication, motivation and leadership resulting in commitment to the organization and improved performance. On the other hand, hard HRM is only concerned with the organization ensuring effective utilization of its employees, and will have emphasis on the "qualitative, calculative and business strategic aspects of managing the head count resource in as natural a way as for any other economic factor" (p. 535). Some scholars with contrary opinion note that meeting the needs of employees has never been an organization's priority or objective in itself (Edgar & Geare, 2005), and if the soft HRM model has validity then there should be a demonstrated clear relationship between "the experience of soft HRM practice and positive employee attitudes reflecting their needs are being met and increasing employee commitment as well as improved productivity" (p. 536). That said, it is important for an organization to find a way of striking a balance between maximizing profits and meeting the needs and goals of their workers, particularly when it comes to the Millennials and younger generations who are the day's largest entrants into the job

market, people not necessarily motivated by a large pay or rising up the corporate ladder as is the case with the older generations (Burkus, 2010).

Sustained Organizational Performance through Soft HRM model

A significant relationship exists between good quality HRM practices and employee work related attitudes, more so when HRM is considered from the employee perspective. (Edgar & Geare, 2005). An organization that cares about retaining its competitive advantage and maintaining an outstanding organizational performance should therefore concern itself with three key things: the environment, the leader, and the worker.

The Environment: Workplace Conditions

Workplace conditions include a broad coverage of different issues and variables which affect staff members in the workplace. The International Labour Organization (ILO) provides that “working conditions are at the core of paid work and employment relationships, and generally speaking working conditions cover a broad range of topics and issues” (ILO, 2018). ILO further notes that these broad range of issues of working conditions include the employees working hours, annual leave and periods of rest, work schedules and work shifts, remuneration including benefits and the physical and mental wellbeing of the workers. Organizations which consider their staff members as the greatest asset have in place a conducive working environment that make their employees to be motivated towards their jobs, therefore improving their work productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, leading to improved profitability for the firm. Most organizations have a working hour policy of forty hours per week, mainly beginning at 8:00am in the morning and closing the day at 5:00pm in the evening. They also have built in an hour of lunch break with some having short breaks of coffee.

In an effort to encourage work-life balance, some organizations have incorporated flexible working hours in which employees are allowed to work remotely away from the office. For example, at the Raytheon International Aerospace and Defense company in America, work-life balance is treasured and employees are provided with various flexible working options depending on where an employee works due to locality, and the type of job they perform (Raytheon Company, 2017). These options include having every other Friday of the week off, meaning that a person works for five days in one week, then the following week they work for four days and keep on altering throughout the year. The other two options are getting every Friday afternoon off from work, having a standard work week and modified work week. Cisco realised that as the old adage goes ‘work without play makes Tom a dull boy’, the company introduced initiatives to spice up their worker’s work life. These initiatives include a ‘fun fund’ which the teams can spend money provided by the company on fun, games and other celebration activities (Cisco, 2018). Other innovative programs in place to attract and retain top talent in the organization include team assignments whereby staff colleagues are encouraged to collaborate and work together to solve an identified problem or task;

time swap whereby workers are allowed to swap twenty percent of their jobs or positions with one another so as to learn; job swap which involves workers swapping one hundred percent of their jobs on temporary or permanent basis with a colleague; and lastly they have stretch assignments in which an employee works across various business groups on particular projects, something which helps to enhance the worker's skills and capabilities (Cisco, 2018).

Many organizations continue to move from fault-finding in their employees to empowering them, again in efforts to retain them in the organizations instead of losing the staff members to their competitors the end up spending more resources on recruitment and training programs. Organizations are shifting from "fixation on weaknesses" to facilitating conditions that promote human flourishing (Geue, 2017). Leadership in organizations should be keen to promote positive practices in the workplace and entrench these practices in the work strategy and policy documents. Making the workplace a better place for workers should not come as an afterthought for the leadership as they make decisions, but it should be at the top of key discussions. As demonstrated by Reytheon and Cisco companies above, not only should organizations be mindful of the work welfare of employees but they should also provide a budget for staff to engage in developmental programs and activities so as to enhance their skills welfare, creativity and productivity. A happy and contented worker is most likely to be fully committed to their work, giving them opportunity to be creative, efficient and effective. Benabou (1996 as cited in Armstrong and Taylor, 2014) established from a research that in many cases "a well-designed training programme can be linked to improvements in business results and returns and that return on investment in training programmes is very high" (p. 286). Further, it was revealed that organizations which train managers got better results than the organizations that do not train their managers. This demonstrates that Soft Model of HRM can therefore be directly linked to an organization's good performance.

The concern for Staff welfare goes beyond the physical work place and extends to the welfare of the employee's families and their social wellbeing. An individual will feel most at peace if their family members are well settled, protected and provided for. At Network Capital Funding Corporation, they consider their employees' success as the organization's own success (Network Capital Funding Corporation, 2017) and they are committed to ensuring that their worker's work-life balance is maintained. Warby Parker, a company which produces and sells eye glasses directly to their consumers have a great plan of organizational culture, whereby they have programs to engage the staff members and keep them together, to also promote team work and activities including common fun lunches so as to keep the teams gelled together thus leverage on the power of unity for better performance. Positive work environment is enhanced through "behaviours and beliefs that promote respect, trust, dignity and social inclusion" (Geue, 2017). Activities such as those promoted by Warby Parker Company enhance the social inclusion component which energizes the workplace (Geue, 2017) and increases staff involvement in team work, subsequently leading to the opening of

doors for team creativity and efficiency and ultimately to good performance for the firm.

Conducive working environment including physical office space where staff members operate from is key in warranting that workers operate from safe and healthy work stations. Employees will not deliver at one hundred percent of their capacity and productivity if their physical working space is not good. Dirty environment could pose a health challenge causing workers to fall ill which causes the company to incur more costs due to increased medical bills and absenteeism. Hence, the company's profits are negatively impacted due to decrease in productivity because of such staff absences from work as they seek medical aid or stay at home recovering from the sickness. Microsoft Company is famed for being one of the healthiest companies in the US, with amenities in the work place installed including campus spa, sports fields for staff members to exercise from, restaurants for workers to find their meals and not starve while working, dry-cleaning services, shops, bank and salon where staff members can visit for much needed relaxation after putting in some hard work (Greatist, 2015).

Investing in technology is crucial for all organizations in the 21st century as more and more meetings, negotiations and transactions are taking place virtually. Production of real time reports enhances the capacity of organization leadership to make quick and informed decisions. Gone are the days when people were compelled to physically meet together in a room in order to deliberate on issues or make decisions. The modern organizations are no longer limited by distance as internet has revolutionized modes of communication and information sharing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced both individuals and organizations to reorganize their ways of working as most people have been forced to "work from home". Most banks have moved from the traditional banking halls to online internet and mobile banking. The banks which were slow to adopt to this new way of doing business were left behind and later on had to play catch up to be at a par business playing field. In Kenya for example, Safaricom Limited took advantage and used the early adopters (Ngugi, Pelowski, & Ogembo, 2010) in the diffusion of innovations to mobile-bank those in the society who were mainly unbanked through M-pesa services (Safaricom Limited, 2018). This was a new dawn in the banking industry in which some banks were slow or resistant to take up mobile banking whereby customers could carry out most of their banking transactions using their hand-held mobile sets. They however have since embraced it and most of them are championing its use.

With the wide range of information available in the internet organizations can learn how to improve their products as well as do online surveys and marketing research for improvement of their products. By embarking on online marketing an organization is able to reach a large number of potential customers who they could not have reached using the traditional means of marketing and advertising such as the print media, radio or television. Besides, with the younger Millennial generation taking over the purchasing power in every industry, the one sure way of reaching them in advertising

is through the internet where they spend hours on end either online especially on social media. Forward looking institutions should make certain that their staff members are technologically empowered with good access to internet both in the office but also in their residences, should they be required to work from home.

Organizational structures and decision making processes can enhance or derail the organization's ability to achieve efficiency and good performance. Organizations which have long chains of command with many layers of hierarchy and decision making levels most definitely slow down their efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the desired goals and targets. Involving employees in decision making is a good way an organization can get the worker's buy in to the goals and objectives, and because they feel as being part of the process of arriving at the decisions then there is less resistance when implementation of such decisions begin. Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2014) advance that "giving employees decision making control over when they perform their work is an increasingly popular approach to job re-designs". They add that this has led to a variety of innovations which they collectively refer to as alternative work arrangements, some of which have been explained above including flexible working time, compressed week, job sharing, job swapping and telecommuting.

According to Forbes (2013), some leaders and organizations which have made transformative and positive turn around decisions include Jack Welch of General Electric, which under his leadership decided to fully fund a first-in-class training centre that years later developed many other great leaders trained under him. Another one is the Samsung Company's sabbatical innovative programme of sending their top talent on a sabbatical across the world. Apple's reconsideration to recall Steve Jobs back to the company after they had fired him many years back was a brave decision, a man who brought with him great ideas and innovations that transformed the mobile telephony industry globally. Particularly, this case in point set by Apple to recall a fired employee demonstrated that organizations can and do actually make mistakes, however the important thing to do is to learn from the mistakes and take a corrective decision or action going forward.

Leadership: Championing Soft HRM Model

Leadership according to (Hoyes, 2014) is defined as a process whereby an individual influences (usually positively) the behaviour and actions of another person so as to achieve a desired result or outcome. Over the years, various leadership styles have been identified and studied which demonstrate that every leader operates a unique style of leading his or her followers. Mostovicz, Kakabadse, and Kakabadse (2009) present that leadership is all about making choices which are divided into two sets of those choices which are desired and those which are not desired. The choice that carries the day is that which has a higher principle than the other and this obviously determines the future of the organization.

Leaders have the critical role of ensuring that they promote creativity and bring out the best in their workers, allowing for an organization to be effective through the various processes and structures that they put in place. The responsibility is on the leadership to provide conducive work environment which enables employees to come up with creative ideas for the organization. Some organizations have not left this to chance and have ensured that there are HR strategies and policies in place to promote creativity (Agbor, 2008), efficiency and effectiveness in the way they do business and promote company performance.

Additionally, leadership in an organization determines the culture that the organization takes. Strong assertive leadership finds opportunities for growth of the organization, actively mobilizes resources and strongly supports its employees in their duties and career development. This alleviates any need for the organization to go through restructuring or down-sizing (Agbor, 2008), something which helps to boost the employees' morale and productivity. A leadership that is open-minded, transformational, and collaborative is at a more advantaged position to promote employee creativity and innovation than a leadership which is heroic, authoritarian, and hierarchical with command and control model (Agbor, 2008). As pointed out by Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2014), the key to managing people effectively ultimately lies with the leader or the manager, leading the organization to productivity and increased levels of profit making profits. Good management bears positive results for everyone including the employees, the management and the organization in general.

Good leadership can ensure that they tap into the creative ideas of their workforce by encouraging them with incentives to think creatively and come up with new brilliant ideas. For example, through their Global Innovation Fund, the Colgate-Palmolive Company established a fund for new ideas from its employees, out of which over four hundred new products were funded by the year 2014 (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2014). Staff members at Colgate-Palmolive Company are encouraged to come up with creative ideas including proper execution plans and proposed partners to work with. The program is open to all employees across all departments and the winning feasible proposal gets selected and given the funds to turn their ideas into actions and products. This program has the full support of the management who allow the workforce time out for creativity and innovation. One of the line of products born out of this program is the famous herbal products in the market today which include herbal bathing soaps and herbal toothpaste (European Diversity Research & Consulting, 2010).

According to Leber (2005), the leader's ability to unleash and focus the power of creativity within themselves and that of their "followers is an essential capability that is required to make transition from an operational manager to strategic and innovative leader" (p.1). The leader himself or herself has to appreciate the importance of creativity and innovation in their workers so as to encourage the them to prosper in the organization. Although organizations are keen to regulate and cut down their costs,

nevertheless a smart leader will ensure that sufficient funds of the budget are set aside for research and development so that their organization can through research stay ahead of the competition, as advanced by Daft (2010).

A leadership which promotes an atmosphere of openness, cooperation and trust (Leber, 2005) encourages the staff members to be free to express themselves and air out their opinions. Such atmosphere also encourages staff members to be free to share their new and creative ideas on how to develop new products for the organization, without any fear of victimization in the event that the idea flops. Tyrannical leaders imbue fear into their workforce which makes them shy of coming forward to present proposals on how to improve the organizations' performance. Winston and Patterson (2006) posit that "the leader recognizes the diversity of the follower(s) and achieves unity of common values and directions without destroying that uniqueness of the person". They further add that "the leader accomplishes this through innovative flexible means of education, training, support and protection that provide each follower with what the follower needs within the reason and scope of the organization's resources, and accommodations relative to the value of accomplishing the organization's objectives and the growth of the follower" (p.8).

Heroic leadership is self-centred with the leader being the centre of attention, and everything else being all about them and revolving around them. The founding father of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was a good and transformative leader for his nation, who turned the country's economy around in one single generation. According to (CNN, 2015), one of Lee Kuan Yew's principle was that of moral leadership because "superior performance requires superior leadership". He put the interest of Singapore and its people sacrificially ahead of his own personal interests which made the citizens and all people in Singapore to reciprocate by putting their trust in their leader and joining hands in building the nation. One of the twelve characteristics that Wong and Davey (2007) have highlighted as contributing to exceptional leaders and workers by extension is that of great courage noting that "they have the courage their worst fears and risk everything in order to remain true to their own conviction and other people's trust" (p. 10). Risk-taking in an organization can free up employees from old habitual habits and drive up workplace innovation and performance (Bolser & Gosciej, 2015). Leaders ought to provide an enabling work environment so that the workers are not afraid of taking risks in order to try out new ideas (Winston & Patterson, 2006).

Employee: The Great Asset

From the lens of the soft HRM model, the worker is the most important asset in an organization and thus should be treated well and their welfare adequately catered for. This in return would boost their morale to creatively work harder and smarter, consequently improving their own as well as the organization's performance. This final section highlights some specific ways that an organization can contribute towards the individual worker's personal development in order to improve their performance. To begin, job satisfaction is one way of ensuring that employees stay interested in their

work and therefore encourage them to stay focused and identify new opportunities for the firm. This is because satisfied and happy workers are most likely to achieve better efficiency which then translates to hire productivity for the organization. Staff members who are fully engaged in their jobs and do not avoid work responsibility through unnecessary absenteeism, which causes production to be high this then improves their own effectiveness (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2014).

Organizations ought to set aside resources and avail opportunities to their workers that promote self-motivation and development. Employees who go the extra mile beyond their formal job description or terms of reference are more likely to motivate themselves towards new ideas, as they would spend time exploring different ways and options to do a specific task. Miron, Erez and Naveh (2004) postulate that “to reach innovative performance creative people need to take initiative in promoting their ideas, with possible corresponding price of low performance quality” (p.1). Advancing one-self’s professional as well as personal development cannot be over emphasised. Most organizations have many internal training and capacity building initiatives whereby staff members get further training at subsidised or at no cost at all to the employee. Professional bodies have various Continuous Professional Development/ Education (CPD/E) programmes which the members must attain a required minimum number of CPD/E hours. For example for the Institute Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK), registered members must attain a minimum of forty CPD hours every year (ICPAK, 2018). With such programmes employees are therefore encouraged to study which enhances their skills, research capability and also improves their work efficiency.

Workers with strong team spirit and strong interpersonal relationships with fellow colleagues demonstrate the tendency to be more effective in their work. They are quick and eager to find out what their colleagues are working on, and if able to give a helping hand they do. Employees with such characteristics are not shy to ask for help from others, and they easily rally their teams to try out new concepts and ideas. Networking beyond the organization is also not difficult for workers with a team spirit who are therefore able to draw new ideas and bring them into the organization.

Many organizations have recognized the importance of teamwork at the work place, and they have incorporated events such as regular team building retreats which are led by team-building professionals to help workers bond and get to know each other better in terms of each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, employees possessing a positive attitude and approach towards their work and life in general have a higher efficiency and are more effective towards their work, which in turn leads to achievement of more results and productivity for the organization. Institutions should provide an environment that encourages their workers to be proactive and to exercise talents which may not necessarily be in their job’s terms of reference. Still, such workers are independent and they work under minimal supervision (if any supervision at all), because they are focused and confident of themselves in what they do. These employees have internal locus of control and high levels of self-efficacy, which

Bandura (1995) describes as the confidence that a person has the necessary capability to accomplish a certain task.

Davis (1999) offers that creative and highly motivated employees tend to be possess high energy and are adventurous with a high intrinsic motivation. These characteristics make them to be more persistent as they try out new ideas, and also more persevering even when their ideas do not work out. With this high energy the creative employees champion (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009) their ideas to fellow colleagues. Additionally, Carmeli and Spreitzer (2009) posit that openness to experience is one of the traits that creativity entails. Open-mindedness requires a person to have the ability to approach a task without any bias, so as to make objective decisions, to decipher clues as well as listen actively to the feedback being provided (Livit, 2007). High performing and creative workers according to Davis (1999) are those who are most receptive to other viewpoints even if the views are contrary to their own, and are open to new world of experiences and growth.

Finally, ethical thinking and behaviour, which entails a person's credibility, the internal belief system, consistency and confidence (Wiltshire, 2011) in everything that a person does is of absolute importance to high performance. Good performing workers have to be beyond reproach in the ideas and concepts they come up with, ideas that have to be original otherwise they should declare, cite or acknowledge borrowed aspects. Organizations should hold their employees to task to ensure that they act in utmost good faith for the good of the organization, otherwise the organization's productivity, efficiency and effectiveness could be jeopardized since ignorance can never be a defense.

Conclusion

A clear link between HR practices and organizational performance has been established in this paper. With the examples cited, it has been demonstrated that organizations which treat their employees well and care for the staff member's wellbeing perform better than those which are only concerned about the profitability of the organization. Those which view their employees as the greatest asset in the organization engage the soft HRM model, and in turn staff members feel valued and are thus motivated to put in more, become more creative and innovative with improved productivity, which subsequently leads to better profitability and performance for the organization. Good working conditions coupled with good transformational leadership provides a conducive environment in which employees can exercise their creativity and innovation, which in turn again enhances their motivation to work and hence leads to an improved overall performance of the organization. Motivated staff members need not be pushed to work in order to bear good results for the organization.

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