

## An Assessment of the Effect of the Implemented Six Human Resource Key Focus Areas on Employees' Performance in Relation to Skytrax Airport Review Ratings (2017 - 2019): A Case Study of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone, Zambia



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**ABSTRACT:** In trying to ensure that they make profits and have good customer service, the Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport (HMNIA) embarked on a quest to build capacity and motivate its employees by formulating the six (6) key Human Resource (HR) focus areas in its 2017-2019 Strategic Plan. This study, therefore, sought to assess the effectiveness of the 6 HR Key Focus Areas implemented at HMNIA vis-a-vis employees' performance. In conducting this study, the cross-sectional mixed methods equal status research design (QUAN + QUAL) was adopted. The study population was all the 143 members of staff at HMNIA. No sample size was used for this study as the study technique used was the census method. Both primary and secondary data were collected, with the primary data collected using interviews and questionnaires. The research had an 86.1% response rate. The collected interview data were analysed to identify themes which were then used to identify trends presented in pie charts, bars, histograms, tables, and pictograms. The key findings were that the majority of employees considered the focus areas to have improved their effectiveness and productivity, and that the top 3 HR focus areas which were viewed as positively influencing their job morale were; improving employee skills, improving employee engagement and creating a learning culture. The study further established that 78% of respondents were interested in the HR focus areas and that 56% rated the HR focus areas to have had 'above 50% positive impact' on their effectiveness and productivity. Overall, the 6 HR Key Focus Areas were found to be effective in improving productivity and boosting employee morale especially when coupled with transparent communication with the employees. The study recommended that the small section of respondents who indicated had not seen the focus areas and the 38% of respondents who said the focus areas were not sufficient be addressed by the human resource office through training in workshops, seminars or inductions at joining the company.

**INDEX TERMS:** HR Key Focus Areas, Employee Performance, Skytrax Airport Review Ratings, HMNIA, Livingstone, Zambia.

### 1. INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

It is almost impossible to achieve progress, success, or effectiveness in an organization if its employees are not satisfied, or motivated to perform their tasks and achieve organizational goals (Cole, 2006). Singh (2015) observed that employee motivation and organizational effectiveness go hand in hand. In this context, there cannot be organizational effectiveness without a motivated workforce, nor a motivated workforce without an effective organization. Monzoor (2011) suggested organizations should work out and make policies and organizational structures that support employee motivation. Therefore, to achieve their goals of increased profit and customer satisfaction, organizations have ensured that their employees, their biggest assets and means of achieving their goals, receive capacity building through awareness sessions, training, and seminars.

Before the Hawthorne Studies conducted by Elton Mayo from 1924 to 1932, employees were considered as inputs in production. However, the Hawthorne Studies concluded that employees are not just inputs in production, but they are the main contributors and effective factors for business production and that employees are not motivated solely by money, and their behavior is linked to their attitudes (Olufade, 2019). In defining motivation, Gardener and Lambert (1972) said, "motivation was about moving employees toward doing their job and achieving organisational goals through rewards".

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The Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) is a public limited company that is wholly owned by the Government of the Republic of Zambia. It was established in 1989 through an Act of Parliament No. 16 of 1989 through the amendment of the Aviation Act Chapter 444 of the Laws of Zambia which has since been repealed and replaced by the Aviation Act No. 5 of 2016. It is also incorporated under the Companies Act Chapter 388 of the Laws of Zambia. The Corporation's mandate is to develop, maintain, and manage the four international airports namely Kenneth Kaunda (Lusaka), Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula (Livingstone), Simon Mansa Kapwepwe (Ndola), and Mfuwe International Airports. It also takes care of the three strategic aerodromes (Kasaba Bay, Mbala and South Downs - Kalulushi), and the seven provincial aerodromes (Chipata, Chinsali, Choma, Kasama, Mansa, Mongu and Solwezi) and provision of Air Navigation services within the Zambia Airspace (ZACL, 2019). The Company had an establishment of 810 employees as of the end of 2019 of which 143 were based at Harry Mwaanga International Airport in Livingstone (Sakala, (2020)).

In 2010, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and the ZACL embarked on a major project to rehabilitate Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport (HMNIA). The project commissioned in 2016 brought key infrastructure upgrade such as a new terminal building with an annual capacity of one (1) million passengers (ZACL, (2019)). To ensure that the infrastructural upgrades were adequately supported by its employees, ZACL embarked on a quest to build capacity and motivate its employees by formulating the six (6) key Human Resource (HR) focus areas in its 2017-2019 Strategic Plan as follows:

**Improve Employee Skills:** Armstrong (2010) describes a skill as a learned ability to perform an action with determined results with good execution often within a given amount of time, energy, or both.

**Create a Learning Culture:** A learning culture is an environment that demonstrates and encourages individual and organizational learning and where both gaining and sharing knowledge is prioritized, valued, and rewarded. It becomes part of the ecosystem of the organization. (CIPD, 2020) observed that it is culture that supports learning at an individual and organizational level and it embeds learning into the way they do things.

**Efficient Utilization of Labour:** Labour according to Cole (2006), is the amount of physical, mental, and social effort used to produce goods and services in an economy. It supplies the expertise, manpower and service needed to turn raw materials into finished products and services.

**Improving Employee Engagement:** Carnall (2007) describes employee engagement as the involvement and enthusiasm of employees. It is the strength of the mental and emotional connection employees feel toward work they do, their teams and their organization.

**Change Management:** Change Management according to Carnall (2007) is a systematic approach to dealing with the transition or transformation of an organization's goals, processes or technologies. Its purpose is to implement strategies for effecting change, controlling change, and helping people to adapt to change. It is a collective term for all approaches to prepare, support and help individuals, teams and organization in making organizational change.

**Team Building:** Team building is a management technique used to improve efficiency and performance of the workgroups through various activities according to Armstrong (2010). It involves a lot of skills, analysis and observation for forming a strong and capable team.

Despite the above 6 HR Key Focus Areas implemented, HMNIA has not been nominated as one of the airports with 'best airport staff' by Skytrax during the period under review (2017 - 2019). It is against this background that this paper holistically sought to assess the 6 HR Key Focus Areas at HMNIA to establish whether they affect employee performance and the organization's effectiveness.

## **1.1. Problem Statement**

Despite having implemented the HR Key Areas of focus at HMNIA, the airport has not been awarded by Skytrax as having the 'Best Airport Staff', a symbol of excellence in service delivery by Skytrax (Skytrax, 2022). Skytrax is an international Air Transport Rating Organization established in 1989 based in London. The top ten 'Best Airport Staff' Skytrax awards recipients in Africa for the period 2017 to 2019 were 2017 – O. R. Tambo, Cape Town, King Shaka, Nairobi, Kigali, Johannesburg, Mauritius, Kigali, Casablanca, Windhoek; 2018 – Cape Town, Johannesburg, King Shaka, Port Elizabeth, Addis Ababa, Marrakech, Mauritius, Bloemfontein, Nairobi, Seychelles, and 2019 – Cape Town, King Shaka, Johannesburg, Addis Ababa, Kigali, Windhoek, Casablanca.

The awards by Skytrax are regarded as a quality benchmark for the world airport industry, assessing customer services and facilities across over 550 airports (Skytrax., 2017). Airports play an active and critical role in the promotion and delivery of products and services in their host cities (Florida-Benitez, 2022). They have become not only a landing ground for air transportation, but also a place where economic contributions are generated for the destination's economy (Bunchongchit, 2021). Furthermore, airports are the gateway for tourists to enjoy and fulfill their dreams in their desired tourist destination. Florida-Benitez, (2022) in his study

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observed that the first and last perception of quality in a tourist destination takes place in the airport. If HMNIA does not receive the prestigious Skytrax 'best airport staff' award despite the organization's adoption and implementation of the six HR key focus areas to enhance its performance to the set international benchmark, Livingstone's "tourist capital" status might be weakened, as air passengers are mostly influenced by the quality of airport service (Bunchongchit, 2021) and if this is lacking, it results in fundamental socio-economic implications at the national level as the country's overall GDP will plummet thereby causing failure by government to sufficiently provide sufficient services in health, education, housing and other fundamental infrastructures like roads etc. It goes without saying that the scenario would further exacerbate poverty as jobs will be reduced and increase inequalities. It is in this regard, therefore, that this study seeks to assess the effect of 6 HR Key Focus Areas implemented at HMNIA on employees' performance.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of Human Resource Management is the combination of practices that would ensure the development of the people in the organization to gain a competitive advantage. According to Resael (2022), strategic human resource management is considered a link between the human resource strategy and the business strategy of the organization (Resael, 2022). The goal of strategic human resources is therefore how organizations can use their human resource to gain a competitive advantage as can be seen in the ZACL's 2017 – 2019 strategic plan.

Rezaei (2022) spells out human resource strategies that can increase organizational performance to include inter alia; staffing, requisite staff training, development, strategy, reward and compensation strategy (Rezaei, 2022). This shows with clarity that to increase organizational performance, quite a number of strategies to be used are interwoven. Based on the fact that HMNIA's set of HR 6 key focus areas and performance has remained relatively unchanged, this dissertation seeks to examine the HR 6 key focus areas at HMNIA as they relate to employee performance organizational effectiveness, and productivity.

There is no one specific HR strategy (focus area) that is applicable to all organizations or industries. To design successful HR strategies for your organization, it is critical to first analyze your industry, map your customer base, analyze consumer/customer needs, analyze competition and ascertain the competitive advantage of your product or service. (Armstrong Michael, 2006), observed that there are several variations of HR strategies, but that there are basically two types of HR strategies which can be identified as; (i) overarching or general strategies and (ii) specific strategies relating to the different aspects of human resource management. Overarching strategies describe the general intentions of the organization about how people should be managed and developed and what steps should be taken to ensure that the organization can attract and retain the people it needs and ensure that employees are committed, motivated, and engaged. Further, Armstrong detailed that specific HR strategies set out what the organization intends to do in areas such as talent management, continuous improvement, resourcing, and employee relations.

(Francis, 2008) undertook a study "The Effect of Human Resource Practices on Organizational Performance: Evidence from Greece" to establish how human resource management practices contribute to organizational performance. The Human Resource practices analyzed were job security, compensation policy, extensive training, and information sharing. The result provided support for all HR practices except for job security. Selective hiring was found to be a key practice that improved organizational performance. Compensation policy, information sharing, decentralization of decision making, and extensive training were significant predictors for all performance variables.

The above literature undoubtedly supports this study in establishing that HR strategies support organizational performance. For an organization to perform satisfactorily, employees are performing as expected. Therefore, assessing the HR strategies as implemented at HMNIA is critical to assess if employee performance was enhanced by the 6 HR key focus areas.

A study carried out by (Eddy, 2010) sought to study the expectations and priorities of young employees. They found that this category of workers rated opportunities for career advancement as the most desirable work-related attribute followed by good people to relate to and opportunities for good training and development. According to these researchers, surprisingly, pay, benefits and job security were ranked in the middle behind career advancement.

The literature cited above opines that age determines what factors motivate employees and to the young employees, the cited literature indicates that the possibility of career advancement and continuous development is motivating for them. This is seconded by pay, benefits and job security. Undoubtedly so, the cited literature resonates with the purpose of this thesis in seeking to assess the impact of the 6 HR key focus areas (age excluded) which are also hoped to boost employee performance

A study by (Alzoubi, 2019) did reveal that each human resource practice has a role in the build up to the performance of the organization. The study used forty organizations within the United Arab Emirates to establish investigation for the relation

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between human resource management strategies and organizational performance. 108 employees and 40 managers from the forty organizations were interviewed. The results showed a positive impact of human resource strategies and practices on the organizational performance.

The above cited literature resonates well with this study; though this study shall go a step further to establish the impact of HR strategies on the employee performance as well.

## **2.1. Gaps in Literature Cited**

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that a lot of studies have been done on the Human Resource interventions or strategies. However, most of the literature which is easily accessible is from outside Zambia. There seems to be a gap on local empirical literature review on the Effect of Human Resource Strategies (HR key focus areas) on Employee Performance in Zambia especially in the aviation industry. This study will, therefore, serve as a local resource on the subject matter. The literature reviewed also revealed that there was no standard set of HR strategies outlined to solve similar challenges.

## **2.2. Theoretical Frameworks**

The identified theories are those in line motivation in relation to human resource strategies and employee effectiveness and/or productivity. To this end, the thesis will be predicated on two distinct motivational theories that explain conceptually the relationship between HR strategies and employee performance. The two motivational theories relevant and necessary to human resource strategies and employee performance to be discussed in this study are Equity Theory of Motivation and Maslow's Theory of Needs.

### **2.2.1. Equity Theory of motivation**

Equity theory, developed by John Stacey Adams in the 1960s (Abdelghafour Al-Zawahreh., 2012), is the perception of equitability and inequity. The basic principles of equity theory boil down to how employees compare themselves with others in terms of two things; input (effort) and outcomes (rewards) according to (Reginald, 2012). Likewise, (Abdelghafour Al-Zawahreh., 2012) did establish in their study that equity theory is one of the most valid frameworks to understand human attitudes and motivations. Important to note is that equity theory helps us understand what motivates employees. Therefore, the more organizations understand the model the more they can find ways to attract and retain great employees. It is also critical to note that, when employees perceive that the balance between input (what they contribute to the organization) and output (rewards they receive) is out of alignment, their behavior changes (Madi, 2012).

According to the theory, when employees think their work environment or setup is unfair, they (consciously or unconsciously) do what they can to return it to a state of fairness. Feelings of inequity lead employees to adjust how they work. The research conducted by (Reginald, 2012) illustrates that when employees feel distressed by inequity, they may react in one or all of the following ways; they may restrict their inputs to a level they believe is consistent with the outcomes they receive; they may meet with their supervisors to verbally negotiate a better deal, meaning they will struggle to find a balance between work and reward; and finally they may quit the organization.

Similarly, the research conducted by (Ogolo John Ibinwangi., 2016) concluded that fair and just treatment are major factors that motivate employees in organizations. It revealed that when organizations take cognizance of what has to be done and take action to motivate employees, by giving employees the best possible rewards they expect, it will lead to high job performance and also reduce employee turnover. The study undertaken by (Abdelghafour Al-Zawahreh., 2012) also established that equity theory has characteristics such as prediction of performance, work satisfaction, construct validity, utility, that can predict performance and work satisfaction, and feasibility, which is the problem of the individual who will respond to inequality stimulation and who will not.

Furthermore, a study conducted by (Reginald, 2012) established that equity theory can be used to measure how satisfied employees are in their jobs. The model is therefore relevant to this study in that it can be used to measure the study's objectives such as how satisfied employees are after assessing the effectiveness of the HR focus areas on effectiveness and productivity, their behavior after finding out the perception of employees about the focus areas and to finally measure how satisfied employees are after establishing the HR focus areas which influence employee morale.

In addition, employee performance is an important factor to be considered by any organization as its success or failure depends largely on the job performance of the individuals working for the organization (Ogolo John Ibinwangi., 2016). Given this finding as well as other conclusions from other various studies cited, it can be safely concluded that Equity Theory is relevant and a necessity to this study as it helps to explain employee behavior and provides the possible factors that might decrease or increase

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efficiency and employee performance, which is directly in line with the purpose of this study which seeks to generally assess the effect of the HR strategies on employee performance.

### **2.2.2. Maslow's theory**

The psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a theory that suggests that human beings are motivated to satisfy five basic needs which are arranged in a hierarchy. (Tanner, 2022) states that Maslow's theory suggests that we seek to satisfy the lowest level of needs first. Once this is done, we seek to satisfy each higher level of need until all the five needs are satisfied. In the research undertaken by (Reginald, 2012), it was illustrated that Maslow's theory has five levels of needs namely; physiological needs, security needs, social or belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs are basic issues of survival such as salary, stable employment and working environment (Tanner, 2022). Security needs involve stable physical and emotional environment issues such as benefits, pension, safe work environment, and fair work practices (Tanner, 2022). Belongingness (social) needs are social acceptance issues such as friendship or cooperation on the job (promoting group working across teams) (Tanner, 2022). Esteem needs which are positive self-image, respect, and recognition issues such as job titles, nice workspaces, and prestigious job assignments (Tanner, 2022). Finally, self-actualization needs are achievement issues such as workplace autonomy, challenging work, training, secondments, and opportunities for promotion (Tanner, 2022). The simple idea of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is that needs are constantly changing, as one need is met, the desire for the other needs sets in. Maslow's theory speaks to this study, in that as management decides on the HR strategies to implement to enhance employee performance, due consideration should be made to ensure that appropriate HR strategies are selected to fit with the level of needs which can motivate respective employees to perform.

It should, however, be noted that modern motivation has evolved from Maslow's Hierarchy of needs alone. Maslow's theory has been observed to be unrealistic when considering everyday reality, and that it focuses on meeting needs and fulfilling growth potential reflects an individualistic, self-obsessed outlook that is part of the problem faced by society rather than a solution (Saul Mcleod, 2022). Nonetheless, this motivation tool remains important and can help HR professionals achieve many organizational goals such as improving employee skills, creating a learning culture, team building and improving employee engagement.

In another research conducted by (Jerome, 2013), it was established that human resources management was very important in organizations and that theories to motivate employees to perform more efficiently and effectively were critical as they enhanced employee performance. This research highlighted Maslow's theory as one such theory that HR practitioners should rely on when dealing with employee behaviors (Jerome, 2013). The study concluded that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is still important and relevant in today's business organizations, more so to every organization that seeks to obtain success and excellence (Jerome, 2013). He advised that any attempt to shy away from practical application of hierarchy of needs theory will negatively affect the organizational culture, human resource management and employee performance.

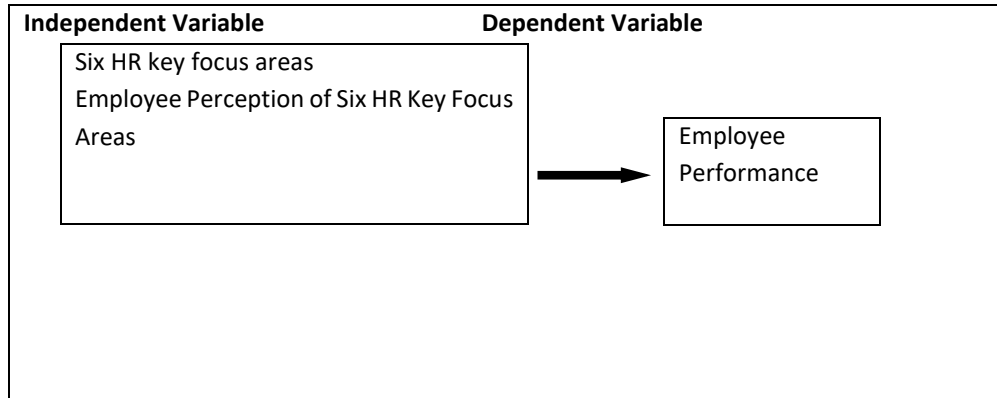
In practice, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is used by several organizations to design HR strategies to respond to needs organizations wish to meet to improve employee performance (Baker and Hart, 2008). Fulfilling Maslow's hierarchy of needs directly impacts jobs satisfaction (Herrity, 2022) which in turn improves employee performance. It was also found that applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, resulted in employees feeling safe and secure at work, a boost in team spirit, improved managements capabilities, increased the employee retention rate because employees now felt wanted, and an overall increase in productivity at all levels (Paichitrojjana, 2021); (Huma Parveen., 2017). These benefits are similar to the HR strategies HMNIA implemented with a view of enhancing employee performance. Therefore, Maslow's theory supports the purpose of this study in assessing the effectiveness of the HR focus areas, establishing the perception of employees about HR, and also establishing the HR focus areas that influence employee morale.

### **2.3. Conceptual Framework**

This study assumes that appropriate HR strategies help to enhance employee performance. The relationship of the two variables is illustrated in Figure 2.



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**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**  
 Source: Researchers Design (2023)

The general knowledge from literature is that HR practices are interrelated and do have an impact on employee performance. They essentially have a positive effect on the performance of employees. It is however important to note that organizations select appropriate HR strategies to support the identified areas which need to be addressed.

**3. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted cross-sectional mixed methods equal status research design (QUAN + QUAL). The decision to adopt an equal status research design assumes that no one of the two methods have more weight in this study (Bentah, 2015). The study was undertaken at the Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone (HMNIA). This is one of the airports maintained and managed by Zambia Airports Corporation Limited. The study population was all the 143 members of staff at Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport. No sample size was used for this study as the study technique used was the census method which is a systematic method that collects, analyzes, and reports data from all members of a population (Kothari, C.R. and Gang,W., 2014). To collect primary data, this study used interviews and questionnaires with closed questions to collect data from the organization’s employees. Data was collected, analyzed and reported from the whole population of 143 employees and a response rate of 123 respondents was achieved translating to 86.1%. Secondary data from previous collected data was also used in this study. After the survey data was collected, the raw data were organized and prepared for data analysis by transcribing interviews, and categorizing questionnaire responses by sorting and arranging data into different types. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using the Descriptive statistics methods. The qualitative data was also coded into themes and descriptions. Interrelated themes/descriptions were batched together and the study made interpretations or meaning of the data. Microsoft Excel was also used in the data analysis of this study to produce, pie charts, bars, histograms, tables and pictograms to present the data.

**4. FINDINGS**

**4.1. Impact of the implemented 6 HR Focus Areas on Respondents Effectiveness and Productivity**

When asked to rate the impact of the focus areas on their productivity and effectiveness, it was found that 56% of the respondents stated that the HR focus areas had “Above 50% Positive Impact”, 17% said the HR focus areas had “no impact “on their effectiveness and productivity. When asked about the major impact of the focus areas, the findings revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed that the focus areas provided better execution of their duties because of their improved skills and 78% agreed that they felt more connected to the organization because of employee engagement strategy. The next major impact from the findings was increased levels of motivation because of the heightened transfer of knowledge sharing both at the workplace and their job due to the learning culture and that respondents were able to better adjust to change due to change management provided by the HR focus areas which was scored at 73% for each of the focus areas.

**4.2 Perception of the Implemented 6 HR Key Focus Areas on respondents**

The study established that 67% of the respondents were aware of the focus areas while 33% of the respondents submitted that they were not aware. It was also revealed that majority, 53%, of respondents thought that the focus areas improved their effectiveness and productivity, 40% said no change was noted, and 7% said their effectiveness and productivity decreased.

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Findings showed that the top focus areas viewed as not relevant to the respondent's work were; team building with the highest score at 25%, efficient utilization of labour at 24%, and the least relevant focused area was change management at 21%.

## **4.3 HR Focus Areas Viewed by Respondents to Influence their Job Morale**

Findings showed that the top 3 options under '*Influence job morale*' were; Improve employee skills at 31%, Improving employee engagement at 24% and create a learning culture at 20%. Results for '*Do not influence job morale*' showed that the highest score was for Efficient utilization of labour at 20%, followed by Improving employee engagement and Change Management both at 19%. Findings showed that the top three HR Focus Areas which would most motivate respondents were; Praise and Recognition (24%), Promotion Opportunities (21%) and good relationship with supervisor was rate at 20%.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Effect of the implemented 6 focus key areas on the Respondents' Effectiveness and Productivity at HMNIA.**

With regards to how respondents rated the impact of the focus areas on their effectiveness and productivity, the findings indicated that the majority of the respondents at 56% said they had achieved above 50% positive impact because of the implemented focus areas. Similarly, (Fatma Zerah Tan, 2021) established that there was a positive relationship between human resource strategies and overall organizational performance. Furthermore, the respondents' response on the major impact the human resource key focus areas have had on their effectiveness and productivity, findings indicated that the focus areas with the major impact was on employee skills at 80% of the responses. (Armstrong Michael, 2006) suggested that there are basically two types of human resource strategies, namely general and specific strategies. Employee skills is a specific focus area. The researchers attribute the choice of employee skill focus area as the major impacting focus areas because it benefits employees specifically at a personal level, which could have motivated the response.

### **5.2 Respondents' Perceptions of the HR focus areas implemented by management.**

Regarding the respondents' awareness of the focus areas implemented, the findings suggested that a bigger portion of the respondents at 67% were aware of the focus areas being implemented. Employees being aware of the implementation process is a critical stage. (Nishii & Wright, 2021) suggested that awareness of the focus areas is critical to the success of the program as it is one of the stages in HRM implementation. (Armstrong, 2010) suggested that distinctive human resource practices shape the core competencies that determine how organizations compete. On whether the focus areas were sufficient or not sufficient to increase the respondents' effectiveness and productivity, the finding revealed that the majority at 62% of the responses said the focus areas were sufficient to increase their effectiveness and productivity. The researchers attributed this positive response to the distinctive and appropriate focus areas being implemented. However, the findings also revealed that 38% of respondents said the focus areas were not sufficient to increase their effectiveness and productivity. It is, therefore, necessary to establish what could be considered sufficient to improve their performance. Team building enhances problem solving skills, increases innovation, improves job satisfaction, increases collaboration and teams. Similarly, the study by (Fapohunda., 2013) discovered that team building focus area contributed to employee performance and ultimately to the organizational goals and objectives. It is therefore important that management sensitizes its employees the benefits of this particular focus area.

### **5.3 HR focus areas which influenced the respondents' job morale.**

Regarding the top 3 focus areas viewed by respondents as influencing their job morale, the findings suggested that improving employee skills (31%), improving employee engagement (24%) and creating a learning culture (20%) were the 3 top selected focus areas. The 3 ticked focus areas are all general or overarching strategies.

(Armstrong., 2010) suggested that overarching strategies describe the general intentions of the organization about how people should be managed and developed, and what steps should be taken to ensure that the organization attracts and retains people it needs and ensure that employees are committed, motivated and engaged. The researchers attribute this outcome to the desire by respondents to have 'personal' benefits as opposed to general focus areas which benefits the organization at large. Similarly, (Hammoud, 2017) established in his study that engaged workers felt valued and consequently their morale was raised.

On the other hand, the study revealed efficient utilization of labour (20%), improving employee engagement (19%) and change management (19%) as the least focus areas which respondents viewed as not influencing their job morale. (Cole, 2006) states that efficient utilization of labour is the amount of physical, mental, and social effort used to produce goods and services in an economy. Employee engagement is the involvement and enthusiasm of employees (Carnall, 2007). Change Management is a systematic approach to dealing with the transition or transformation of an organization's goals, processes, or technologies (Carnall, 2007). In regards to focus areas viewed by respondents as focus areas that would motivate them the most at the work

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place, the study established that the top 3 elected options were; Praise and Recognition (24%), Promotion Opportunities (24%) and relationship with supervisor (21%). In his study (Hasssan, 2016) affirmed that workers get motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Based on (Rezaei, 2022)'s findings, human resource strategies affected the Organizational Performance in non-financial dimensions more than financial performance. Regarding how motivated or de-motivated the respondents were currently, the study revealed that the larger proportion of respondents at 62% were motivated while least response was 7% for respondents who said they were highly de-motivated. The study by (Aigbavboa, 2017) established that HR strategies motivated employees. (Sajid Hussain Awan, 2020) conducted a study which revealed that motivated employees increase the capability of the organization to achieve its mission, goals and objectives. The study further indicated that motivated employees will feel as having a strategic partnership with the organization and their commitments and loyalty will increase from day to day.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

Employees do have an interest in the strategies to improve on their work experience and ultimately improve their productivity. This should be taken as a signal for management to make deliberate investments in areas such as those being implemented by the HMNIA, the six (6) HR key focus areas. This study has shown that these focus areas improve effectiveness and productivity, especially when implemented with employee buy-in. This, therefore, means that such strategies should be adequately communicated to employees and employees should be encouraged to ask questions either for guidance or even knowledge on such strategies, while management should ensure to keep an open channel of communication on any such strategies. Based on the findings of this study, improving employee skills, improving employee engagement and creating a learning culture are the areas that employees said had the most positive impact on their work while change management, improving employee engagement, and efficient utilization of labour, had the least positive effect on their work.

### **6.2. Recommendation**

The study recommended that the small section of respondents who indicated had not seen the focus areas and the 38% of respondents who said the focus areas were not sufficient be addressed by the human resource office through training in workshops, seminars or inductions at joining the company.

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