

Examining The Effectiveness of Human Resource Systems and Practices in Promoting Employee Productivity: A Case Study of The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness and impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) systems and practices on employee productivity at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Lusaka. The sample comprised 64 employees from various positions within the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. The study found that the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has implemented several HRM systems and practices, including performance management, training and development, rewards and recognition, and work-life balance initiatives. The effectiveness of these practices in promoting employee productivity was rated as moderate, with performance management receiving the highest rating. Based on the findings, recommendations for enhancing HRM effectiveness at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock include strengthening leadership and Communication channels, improving the work environment, enhancing employee job satisfaction, and allocating adequate resources for HR initiatives. Lastly, this study underscores the significance of effective HRM systems and practices in promoting employee productivity at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. By implementing the recommended strategies, the Ministry can optimize employee performance, foster a positive work culture, and achieve its goals more efficiently.

Key words: *Performance, leadership, management strengthening, Communication, productivity, training and development, rewards and recognition*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the background information to the study, the statement of the research problem, the research objectives, research questions, significance of study, conceptual framework, scope of study and operational definitions.

As the focus of this research study, the HRM systems and practices in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock that include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee relations require assessment to appreciate its efficacy. Existing practices are designed to ensure that the MOFL has competent people serving in the right positions, with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively (Namangala, 2018).

This study therefore, aims to examine the effectiveness of HRM systems and practices, the extent to which it promotes employee productivity of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. The study seeks to identify the HRM systems and practices in place in the Ministry, evaluate their

effectiveness in promoting employee productivity, and identify areas for improvement.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite having HRM systems and practices in place, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has continued to be faced with challenges in promoting employee productivity. These challenges include high staff turnover, low morale, and reduced productivity. These challenges have a significant impact on the Ministry's ability to achieve its objectives and contribute to the development of Zambia's agriculture sector (Kapembwa, 2020).

The Ministry's HRM systems and practices include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee relations. These practices are designed to ensure that the Ministry has the right people in the right positions, with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively. However, it is unclear whether these HRM systems and practices are effective in promoting employee productivity (Chansa, 2016).

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent of effectiveness of HRM systems and practices in promoting employee productivity in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. The study will investigate domestication of the factors that influence employee productivity in the Ministry and identify areas for improvement. The body of knowledge to be gained will contribute to strengthening HRM systems and practices in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and other organizations in Zambia.

1.3. General Objective

To examine effectiveness and impact of human resource systems and practices on employee productivity at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Lusaka.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- i. To examine existing key HRM systems and practices under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and their effectiveness in promoting employee productivity.
- ii. To analyze driving factors that influence employee productivity under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Lusaka.
- iii. To assess the impact of HRM systems and practices on employee productivity in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Lusaka.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

From conceptual premise, it is logical for key theoretical framework to be used in examining the effectiveness of Human Resource systems while promoting employee productivity in Zambia. The study provides a case study of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, is the Job Characteristics Model (JCM). The JCM was developed by Hackman and Oldham in 1975 and is based on the idea that certain job characteristics can lead to higher motivation, job satisfaction, and performance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing key human resource management systems and effectiveness for productivity. Key HRM systems and practices that are considered effective in promoting employee productivity globally include training and development programs, performance management systems, rewards and recognition programs, employee engagement initiatives, and work-life balance programs. According to Martin (2016) training and development programs enhance employee skills and knowledge, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Performance management systems that provide regular feedback and coaching can motivate employees and improve their performance. Rewards and recognition programs that acknowledge and inspire employees for productivity incentivize motivation and job satisfaction. Employee engagement initiatives that promote communication, participation, and involvement in decision-making processes can enhance employee commitment and productivity.

further work-life balance programs that help employees balance their personal and work responsibilities can enhance their well-being and productivity.

Delaney and Huselid (1995) categorized the human resource management practices into the factors that improved employee skills, motivated and inspired the employees, and arrangement design of the workplace. Koch and McGrath (1996) reported that firms using more sophisticated staffing practices had higher labor productivity. Patterson et al (1997) while discussing impact of people management practices on business performance has argued that HR practices in selection and training influence performance by providing appropriate skills.

Worsham (1997) successful service organizations invest heavily in HRM, especially ongoing training. The management of human resource is crucially important in all organizations but it is particularly true of service organizations where every employee is (or potentially is) in direct contact with customers. Lam and White (1998) reported that firm's HR orientations (measured by the effective recruitment of employees, above average compensation and extensive training and development) were related to return on assets, growth in sales and growth in stock values.

Parasuraman et al., (1988) Research has indicated that service quality has been increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the success of any business. Cowling and Newman (1995) the banking sector in this case is not exceptional. Service quality has been widely used to evaluate the performance. Additionally, previous studies have mainly focused on the role of HRM systems and practices in promoting employee productivity, but there is a need for more research to understand the challenges and barriers that hinder the effective implementation of these practices. For instance, it is important to explore how limited resources, inadequate training and development opportunities, and inadequate HRM policies and practices affect the effectiveness of HRM systems and practices in

promoting employee productivity in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Furthermore, while some studies have examined the impact of HRM practices on employee productivity, there is a need for more research to explore the role of other factors, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, motivation, and communication channels, in influencing employee productivity. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect employee productivity in the MFL and inform the development of effective HRM systems and practices to enhance productivity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The choice of this design was necessitated by need to strengthen data collection process, analysis and presentation. Descriptive research emerges as a responsive approach in creative exploration, and serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations, and then test or validate those explanations (Krauthwohl, 1993). Survey and field research was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

2.1 Target Population

Population to inform the study jurisdiction was the universe of unit from which the sample was selected within the HR departments, units and practitioners. According to Babbie (1992) a study population is the aggregation of element from which the sample elements actually selected. The population of interest in this study captured one hundred and seventy-seven (177) staff within the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in Lusaka, Zambia.

2.2 Sampling Design

This study employed combination of sampling designs, that included purposive sample technique to sample subject relevant respondent of segmented HR functional levels under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. This will be

complemented by random sample of two key informants in the Human resource department at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries to participate in the research.

2.3 Sample Size Determination

Sample size constitute the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute the sample, and this answers how many sampling units should be surveyed and interviewed, (Kothari 1990). However, to determine the sample size from our given population of one hundred and seventy-seven (177), the Taro Yameni formula was used as follows;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N= population of Study (177)

n= sample of study

(e)= level of significance

Note (e) = 0.1 (90% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{177}{1 + 177(0.1)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{177}{1 + 177(0.01)}$$
$$n = \frac{177}{1 + 1.77}$$
$$n = \frac{177}{2.77}$$
$$n = 64$$

Therefore, the sample size under this study is 68 plus the two key informants from the Human Resource department staff at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries in Lusaka, Zambia.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

The main instrument for data collection included a structured questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions. This was administered to the respondents at their work premises. The researcher used structured self-administered questionnaires covering all the variables in the study. The data

obtained was mainly primary sourced through the use of questionnaires. Sixty-four (64) questionnaires were self-administered with open ended and closed ended questions to Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries staff. Guidance was offered to ensure accurate supply of information.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was entered in the computer, sorted, edited, classified and coded. The resultant data then subjected to Stata and Microsoft excel for analysis. This generated statistical products such as frequency tables for demographic and descriptive data.

2.6 Limitations of study

Limitations were forecasted based on the expert guidance according to Beins (2004). These have been identified as factors foreseen as restrictions, problems and such other elements which might affect the attainment of the objectivity and validity of the research findings. The following constitute key limitations of study:

Financial constraints: funding to conduct the research is going to be a challenge in that this research is self-funded and there are a lot of costs to be incurred such as transport, printing of questionnaires, binding and others.

Limited reference material on the topic under study from the Zambian perspective; hence the research focuses to rely on comparative material from other scholars from other countries.

Time limitation: it is focused that time available to discharge this study is limited that limits respondent to those that domicile in Lusaka and Chongwe districts.

2.7. Ethical Consideration

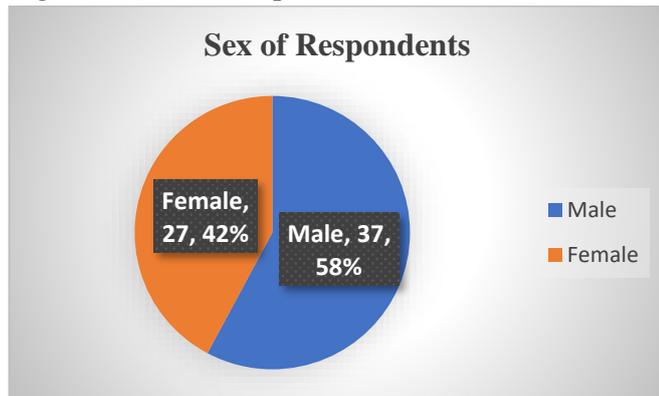
In the process off data collection, ethical issues have been prioritized, including adherence to Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) will be obtained (Hofbauer et al, 2022). This ethical adherence is important as without it, research ethics data validity and trustworthiness will be questionable. As

observed by researchers like Patton (2002) point out that ethical rules like informed consent and confidentiality as the key rules to be followed during data collection process. The following are some of the ethical issues considered in the research:

3.0 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

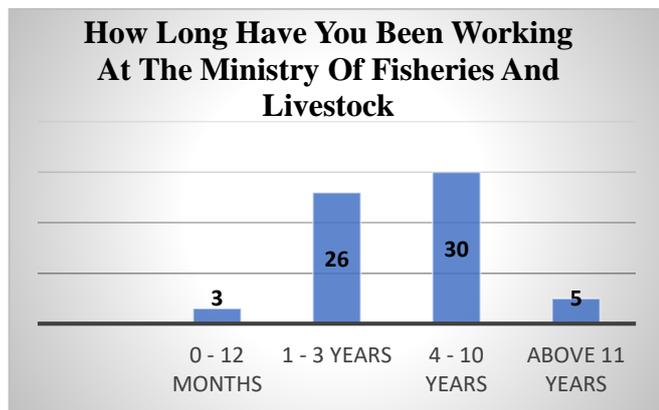
3.1 Characteristics of Respondents (Bio Data)

Figure 1: Sex of Respondent



Source: Field Data, 2023

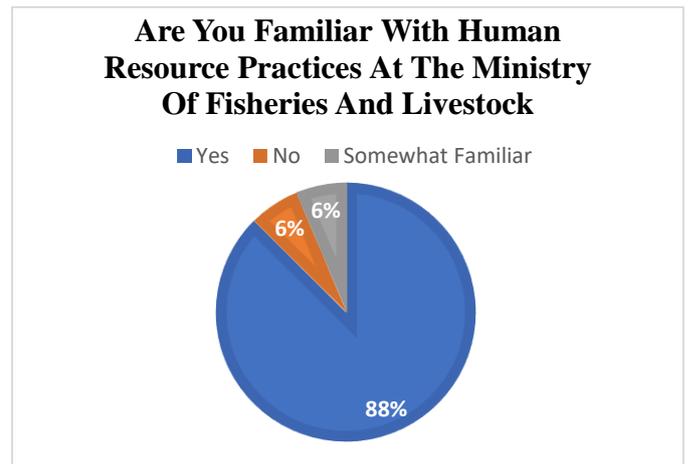
According to our findings on the sex of the research participants, the findings show that 58% of the respondents were Male and 42% of the respondents were Female.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

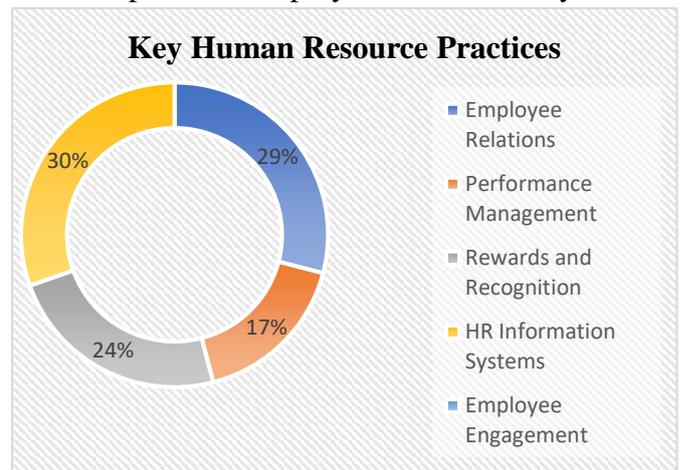
According to the findings on the how long the research participants have been working at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. Our findings indicate that the majority of the participants have been working at the Ministry between 4 -10 years. Then 26 of the participants have been at the Ministry between 1 – 3 years. Then 5 participants have been at the Ministry for over 11 years and 3 of

the participants have been at the Ministry less than 12 months.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

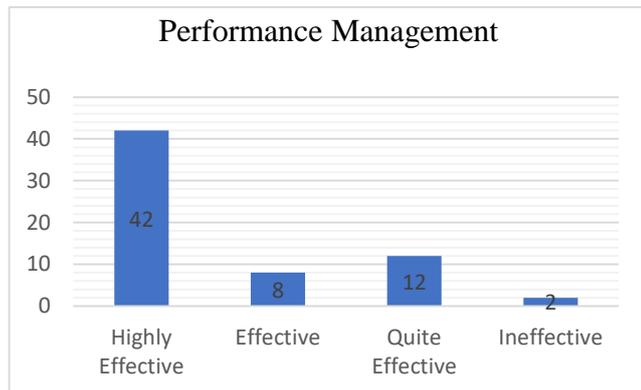
On the aspect of familiarity with the human resource practices at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, the findings show that 88% of the respondents were familiar with the Human Resource practices at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. Then 6% of the respondents were somewhat familiar and another 6% of the respondents were not familiar with the human resource practices employed at the Ministry.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

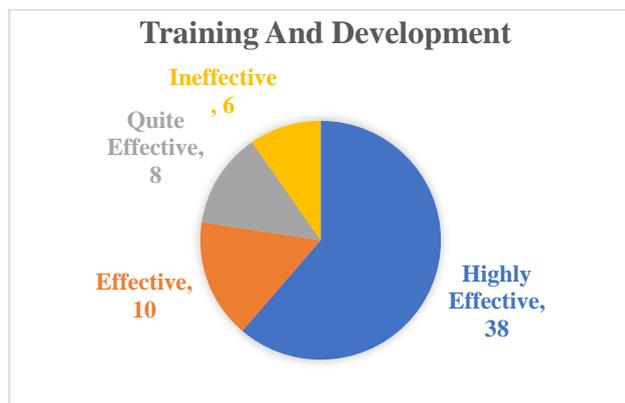
After engaging the human resource department at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock on the key human resource practices currently implemented at the Ministry, the findings show that, the Ministry has implemented Recruitment and Selection, Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Employee Engagement, HR Information Systems, Rewards and Recognition,

Performance Management and Employee Relations.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of Performance management as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 42 of the respondents mentioned that performance management was Highly effective then 12 respondents mentioned it was quite effective. Then 8 respondents mentioned that performance management was effective and two respondents mentioned that performance management was ineffective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

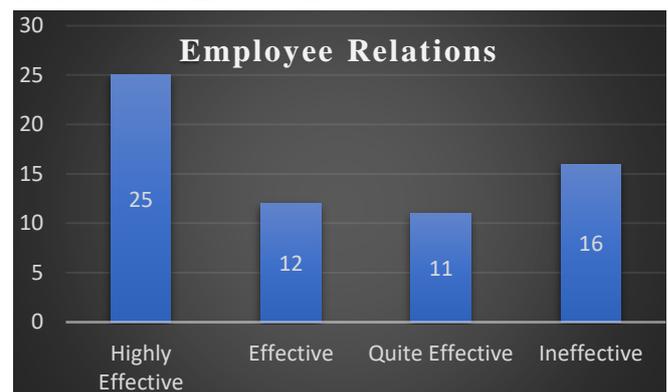
According to the findings on the effectiveness of Training and Development as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 38 of the respondents mentioned that training and development was Highly effective then 10 respondents mentioned it was effective. Then 8 respondents mentioned that training and development was quite effective and 6 respondents mentioned that training and development was

ineffective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of rewards and recognition as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 50 of the respondents mentioned that rewards and recognition was ineffective then 11 respondents mentioned it was highly effective. Then 3 respondents mentioned that rewards and recognition was quite effective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



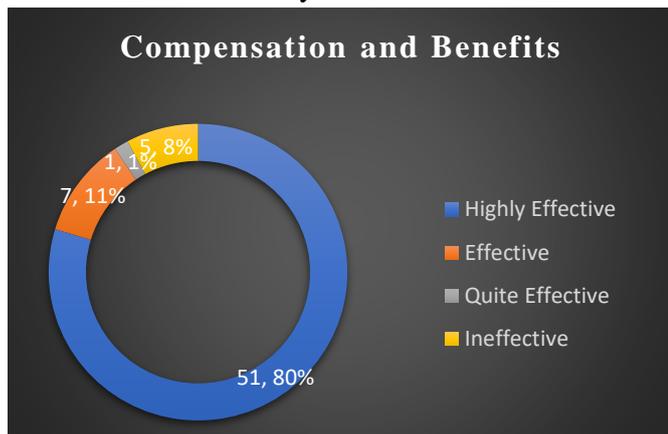
Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of employee relations as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 25 of the respondents mentioned that employee relations was Highly effective, then 16 respondents mentioned it was ineffective. Then 12 respondents mentioned that employee relations were effective and 11 respondents mentioned that employee relations were quite effective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



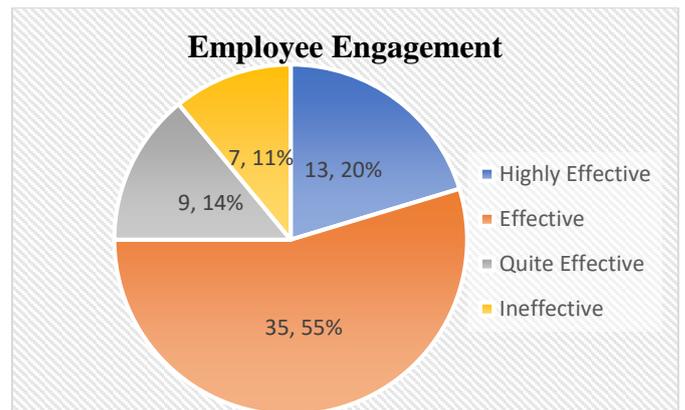
Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of recruitment and selection as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 33 of the respondents mentioned that recruitment and selection was effective then 21 respondents mentioned it was highly effective. Then 9 respondents mentioned that recruitment and selection was ineffective and 1 respondent mentioned that recruitment and selection was quite effective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of compensation and benefits as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 51 of the respondents mentioned that compensation and benefits was Highly effective then 7 respondents mentioned it was effective. Then 5 respondents mentioned that compensation and benefits was ineffective and 1 respondent mentioned that compensation and benefits was quite effective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the effectiveness of employee engagement as a Human resource system at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, 35 of the respondents mentioned that performance management was effective then 13 respondents mentioned it was highly effective. Then 9 respondents mentioned that employee engagement was quite effective and 7 respondents mentioned that it was ineffective at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.



Source: Field Data, 2023

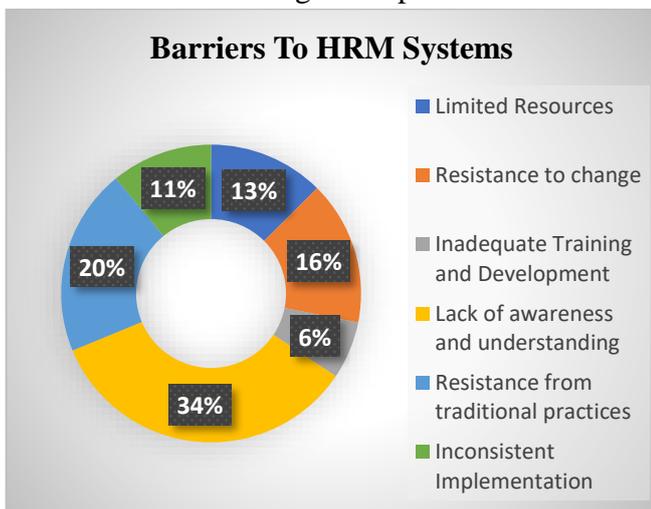
According to our findings on the factors that influence employee productivity, our findings show that 27% of the respondents mentioned that employee motivation was a greatest factor that affects employee productivity. Then 22% of the respondents mentioned the work environment as a factor, then 20% of the respondents attributed it to Communication. 17% of the respondents

mentioned that leadership styles influence employee productivity and then 6% said that recognition and rewards also play a part and 5% of the respondents mentioned that job satisfaction was a factor that influences employee performance.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our finding on the impact of human resource management systems on employee productivity, our data shows that 21 respondents mentioned that Skills development as a human resource management practice and then 17 of the respondents mentioned that performance management also had an impact on the employee productivity and then 12 respondents mentioned that the work environment had an impact on employee productivity. Then 7 respondents mentioned employee relations and 7 other responds that alignment of goals is impacted by effective Human resource management practices.



Source: Field Data, 2023.

According to our findings on the barriers that hinder the effective implementation of human resource management systems, our findings show that 34% of the respondents mentioned that lack of awareness and understanding is a barrier that hinders effective implementation of HRMS. Then 20% of the respondents stated that resistance from traditional practices is a barrier. Then 16% mentioned resistance to change as a barrier. 13% mentioned lack of resources, and then 11% of the respondents mentioned inconsistent implementation as a barrier and then 6% of the respondents mentioned inadequate training and development as a barrier to the effective implementation of Human resource management systems.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The presentation of the discussions was revealed by several key HRM systems and practices in place within the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. These included recruitment and selection processes, training and development programs, performance management systems, employee engagement initiatives, work-life balance practices, and effective leadership and communication. The study found that the Ministry had established recruitment and selection processes to identify qualified candidates for various positions. However, the effectiveness of these processes in promoting employee productivity varied. Some employees reported that the recruitment and selection procedures were rigorous and ensured the hiring of competent individuals, leading to increased productivity. However, others expressed concerns regarding the timeliness and transparency of the process, which could potentially impact productivity.

The study found that the Ministry had a performance management system in place to provide feedback, set goals, and evaluate employee performance. Employees who experienced regular performance evaluations and constructive feedback reported higher levels of productivity. However,

there were concerns raised about the inconsistency in the implementation of the performance management system across departments, which could impact its effectiveness in promoting productivity uniformly.

The study revealed that the Ministry recognized the importance of *work-life balance* for employee productivity. In line with Yıldırım and-Karadag (2021) Policies and practices were implemented to support work-life balance, including flexible work arrangements and adequate leave provisions. Employees who had access to these practices reported higher productivity levels. However, there were concerns raised about the consistent implementation and awareness of these policies across all levels and departments.

The research findings indicated that effective leadership and communication were crucial driving factors for employee productivity. Employees who perceived their supervisors and managers as supportive, communicative, and capable of providing clear guidance reported higher productivity levels. Strong leadership and effective communication played a vital role in aligning employees' goals, fostering teamwork, and motivating them to perform at their best.

Furthermore, the research findings identified several driving factors that influenced employee productivity within the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock:

The study found that leadership style significantly influenced employee productivity. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiring and supportive leaders, positively impacted productivity levels. Leaders who encouraged innovation, provided clear direction, and recognized employees' contributions fostered a productive work environment.

The research highlighted that *engaged employees* were more likely to be productive. Factors such as involvement in decision-making, recognition for achievements, and opportunities for professional growth contributed to higher productivity levels.

Employees who felt valued and connected to their work demonstrated greater motivation and commitment, leading to increased productivity.

Effective communication and timely feedback were identified as key driving factors for productivity. Open and transparent communication channels facilitated the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and problem-solving. Regular feedback allowed employees to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, enhancing their performance and productivity.

The study found that access to *relevant training and development* opportunities influenced employee productivity. Employees who received adequate training to perform their tasks effectively reported higher productivity levels. Continuous learning and skill development programs contributed to improved performance and productivity.

The research findings demonstrated that recruitment and selection processes, training and development programs, performance management systems, employee engagement initiatives, work-life balance practices, and effective leadership and communication were associated with increased productivity levels.

The research also identified areas where HRM systems and practices could be further enhanced to maximize productivity. These included *streamlining the recruitment and selection process* to ensure efficiency and transparency, aligning training programs more closely with employees' job requirements, addressing inconsistencies in the implementation of performance management systems, ensuring consistent communication and involvement opportunities for all employees

The findings emphasized the importance of integrating various Systems and practices to maximize their impact on employee productivity. A holistic approach that considers the interplay between recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, employee engagement, work-life balance, and leadership and

communication is crucial for achieving optimal productivity outcomes.

The research highlighted the role of **organizational culture** in shaping employee productivity. A culture that values employee well-being, collaboration, and continuous improvement positively influenced productivity levels. Creating a supportive and empowering culture that aligns with the Ministry's goals can further enhance employee productivity.

The identified HRM systems and practices, including **recruitment and selection**, training and development, performance management, employee engagement, work-life balance, and effective leadership and communication, play significant roles in promoting productivity. However, there are areas for improvement, such as streamlining processes, addressing inconsistencies, and reinforcing policies, to further enhance productivity outcomes. By integrating these HRM systems and practices and fostering a positive organizational culture, the Ministry can create an environment that supports and enhances employee productivity.

The study found that the **recruitment and selection process** within the Ministry plays a vital role in determining employee productivity. When the HRM practices focused on selecting qualified candidates with relevant skills and experience, productivity levels were higher. Effective recruitment and selection ensured that employees were well-suited for their roles, leading to increased productivity.

The research findings highlighted the **importance of training and development** programs in enhancing employee productivity. When employees received adequate training to perform their tasks effectively and were provided with opportunities for continuous learning and skill development, their productivity levels improved.

The study revealed that a **well-designed performance management system** positively influenced employee productivity. Regular performance evaluations, goal-setting, and feedback played a crucial role in improving

employee performance. When employees received constructive feedback, understood their performance expectations, and had clear goals, they were more motivated and productive.

In line with Sinaga et al (2021), the research findings indicated that **employee engagement** was strongly associated with productivity. HRM practices that fostered employee engagement, such as open communication, involvement in decision-making, and recognition of achievements, positively impacted productivity levels. Engaged employees demonstrated higher levels of commitment, initiative, and dedication to their work.

The study found that **HRM practices promoting work-life balance** had a significant influence on employee productivity. When employees were provided with flexible work arrangements, adequate leave policies, and support for personal well-being, their productivity improved.

Similar to Justin F. Willett, (2023), the research highlighted the crucial role of **leadership and communication** in influencing employee productivity. Effective leadership, characterized by clear communication, support, and guidance, positively impacted productivity levels.

The findings of this research indicated that, recruitment and selection processes, training and development programs, performance management systems, employee engagement initiatives, work-life balance practices, and effective leadership and communication were identified were key factors influencing productivity levels. These findings provide valuable insights for the Ministry to enhance HRM strategies and practices, ultimately leading to increased employee productivity.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The examination of the effectiveness and impact of HRM systems and practices on employee productivity at the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Lusaka has shed light on the existing HRM initiatives and their influence on productivity

levels. By identifying key HRM systems and practices, examining driving factors, and assessing their impact, this study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between HRM and employee productivity in the Ministry.

The findings indicate that the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has implemented several HRM systems and practices that play a significant role in promoting employee productivity. These include recruitment and selection processes, training and development programs, performance management systems, employee engagement initiatives, work-life balance practices, and effective leadership and communication.

The effectiveness of these HRM systems and practices in promoting employee productivity varied across different areas. The recruitment and selection processes were found to be rigorous and effective in ensuring the hiring of competent individuals, although concerns were raised regarding transparency and timeliness. Training and development programs were generally effective in enhancing employee skills and knowledge, but improvements were needed to align them more closely with specific job requirements. The performance management systems had a positive impact on productivity when implemented consistently, providing regular feedback and constructive evaluations. Employee engagement initiatives, such as open communication channels and recognition programs, contributed to increased productivity, but there was room for improvement in terms of transparency and involvement opportunities. Work-life balance practices positively influenced productivity when consistently implemented, and effective leadership and communication were crucial driving factors for employee productivity.

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