

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research proposal is entitled “Competency-based training models for Human Resource Management in Burundi” case of ONATEL. Introduction chapter provides basic information about the topic. This Chapter encompasses the Background of the study, Problem statement, Purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Significance of the study and Research questions which will make an introductory understanding of the topic and the issue as well.

1.1 Background

Service quality has been considered vital for service organization, either public or private. Private sector has adopted this principle much faster compared to public sector due to their primary objective is to maximize profit (Yusra & Agus, 2018). However, public services especially local government, realizing the pressures of daunting tasks in providing excellent service and maintaining public satisfaction, has led their effort to improve quality services continuously (Syuhailah et al., 2020). However, public sector institutions in Burundi still lack competitiveness towards or against private sector. Service quality is among the dimensions of local government performance apart from effectiveness, financial growth and customer satisfaction. Service quality is an indicator that measure efficiency and effectiveness of the services deliver to the stakeholders.

Local government's roles and responsibilities were governed under the Local Government Act of 1976, which includes providing and maintaining public services such as urban infrastructure, waste management, town planning, public health, building control and social economic development. Numerous previous studies have indicated that there are some factors that have been recognized as antecedents which influence service quality, some of such factors influencing service quality include inadequate staffing, poor planning, high employee turnover, education and training of property managers, inadequate adoption of technology and lack of communication among others (Green, 2014; Hoang, 2018; Ithiami, 2016; Noorshella et al., 2015; Ojekalu et al., 2019; Sawant, 2016; Segoro, 2013; Strawderman & Koubek, 2008), and it was stated that due to the distorted and paralyzed service quality, the tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy at work become like a dream or a hallucination in the service industry.

Nevertheless, very few if not none of them have explored and illuminated the climacteric use of Competency-Based training models for HR management to improve service quality as well as organizational development, while it is the core element of organizational development, and this continues to slow down the development of public service industry, as CBT helps to understand the competencies they need to master , to achieve their goals, progress through learning processes without time constraints, explore diverse learning opportunities, as well as collaborate in learning activities with communities of peers and mentors (Prabawati et al., 2018).

Onatel as a public company that was created in 1979, is the workhorse for the implementation of the Government's policy of access for all to fixed and mobile telephones and to the Internet network and it currently has more than 600 employees countrywide. The organization is composed by many departments that make its Human Resources participate in its development as well as its daily services and products delivered to its clients and customers. The departments are HR, Logistics, IT, Marketing, Finance and Accounting, Business Development, Sales and many more. When asked about what he thinks about competency in reference to Onatel employees and staff in 2019, Minister Bunyoni said that competency is the ability to do or perform something or the activity effectively or sufficiently to the extent that it will make stakeholders or customers satisfied which is what the government needs from Onatel and its staff.

With the ICT revolution and the liberalization of the telecommunications sector, ONATEL must face stiff competition from newcomers in the sector with an increasingly demanding clientele in terms of quality of service, network extension and products. derivatives (sale of terminals, sale of sim cards, sale of recharge cards, after-sales service, e-commerce, etc.) (Deloitte, 2016; Gieterma et al., 2012) and in order to be ready or to tackle this competition situation, Onatel needs to have competent employees who will be performing towards its competitors.

ONATEL's ambition is more than ever to regain its former place as a telecommunications giant in Burundi as set out in the recent definition of its strategic vision "Conquest 2015". This requires consistent and strategic investments, the

development of well-designed projects and meticulous monitoring, as well as the maintenance and search for partnerships capable of gaining ever-increasing added value for ONATEL and the country, not leaving behind the best workforce to implement the above-mentioned projects. Long handicapped by the lack of financing and competent workforce, ONATEL is waking up and heading straight for the peaks of unprecedented performance, to the great satisfaction of a clientele requesting lines for the fixed telephone and a very fast, flawless broadband network. mobile and internet congestion (Nkurunziza & Ngaruko, 2009).

It is already worth noting the recent performance of the company: in 2012, ONATEL achieved a turnover of 16 million dollars, an increase of 13%. The company has a positive balance sheet with an annual profit of almost two million US dollars but as time went by, it has decreased significantly based on its financial reports as it was explained by one of its authorities who talked with the researcher when she was planning to conduct this research. To maintain its good financial health and aim for a profit ten times greater, ONATEL has designed an investment plan of 55 million US dollars. In 2013, the investment in the "optical fiber" project would be amount to 9 million US dollars (for the construction of a metropolitan network and distribution of very high-speed Internet to cover all areas of the city of Bujumbura). With this investment, ONATEL would have offered the city of Bujumbura the opportunity to take charge of its digital development through the deployment of a fiber optic network. It would cover the entire city over 150 km of cables, in order to guarantee both equal access for all to new technologies and the economic

development of the capital. Human capital in this case would be very crucial in order to have a powerful and vibrant economy through public investment including using Onatel services and products (République du Burundi, 2011).

Nevertheless, in order for ONATEL to achieve all the above strategic goals and targets, it needs powerful and strong workforce which will support in the implementation of the strategic plans that it has. Researches have revealed that Employees who genuinely enjoy their work are more productive, happier, and more successful. This increases self-confidence and inspires greater performance and greater success for both employee and employer (Hesse, 2018; Ismail & Lu, 2014; Transformation, n.d.; Zahra et al., 2014). In order to get and retain strong and performing workforce, training and development programs are expected to be enhanced and support by every department of the organization. ONATEL has tried to achieve this before but it didn't work, where they tried different types of training but none of them was successful to the extent it was expected. CBT was one of the training methods or styles that were tried and failed due to many circumstances as explained by one of the top-ranking individuals who didn't want his name or position to be revealed in the research. *"We tried to implement different types of training to regain employees' performance and engagement, but all ended up in vain because of many reasons including lack of enough budget, lack of technology tools or digital infrastructures, lack of qualified trainers and many more. But we are sure that when we come back with full combat style to conduct CBT as it was seen as one of the best trainings, things will be tackled and successful."* He said during interview.

In line with the current situation of Onatel that wants/is expected to implement CBT, there are strategies that should be used in order to achieve success and sustainable development namely: Organizational Scanning: Analyze SWOT: strength, weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A human resources (HR) SWOT analysis is a process of collecting and analyzing data to answer critical questions about an organization and how to manage a workforce. This analysis allows business owners to understand what drives the business and what kind of decisions are going to help the company moving forward (Consulting, 2007; Suksup et al., 2020). Strategic Planning: Identifying how objectives can be achieved and what strategies to apply. Strategic planning is an important performance driver in all industrial settings and enhances both economic performance and organizational innovation. Some research evidence suggests that more strategic planning and more new product development projects lead to better firm performance. Although strategic planning is a process for anticipating environmental turbulence, the logical sequential process often prescribed in the literature is not sufficient to influence performance (Skokan et al., 2013).

Competency profiling: Analyzing of internal performance with existing HUMAN resources. By doing this, Onatel will figure out what are the competencies of its employees and what are they lacking to perform given jobs. This is because Competency Profiling is typically a method for identifying specified skills, knowledge, attitudes and behavior necessary to fulfilling a task, activity or career. In most commercial organizations its ultimate purpose is to provide value to the external

customer (Shellabear, 2009). Competency Gap analysis: Analysis of the actual competence (current) with ideal competence needed in order to achieve organizational goals as mentioned above is also paramount for Onatel to rebuild its employee engagement which will in turn make Onatel powerful and performing. A competency gap analysis is the process in which organizations list down its future goals, required employee competencies, current employee competencies, and the best ways to minimize the gaps. Every competency, pertaining to people, processes, structures, is put under the lens to holistically diagnose the gaps and this will be one of the main elements to support Onatel in the implementation of CBT and the rebound of its success and performance.

Competency development: Organization (Onatel) needs to recruit new workers with ideal competencies or set training programs for existing employees, because competence development as the practice of developing one or several competencies in a specific way and in a particular direction, and 'Development' which refers to: Improving existing competencies, whereby ways of accomplishing this include targeted exercise, gaining additional knowledge and changing your attitude will all trigger the power, skills, knowledge and attitudes of employees that will be useful to the performance of Onatel. This will also boost employee green self-efficacy where green self-efficacy is said to be the belief individuals have that they can take actions to improve environmental quality regarded efficacy as a valuable component in human competence development because it can adjust individuals' sensations, thinking formations, actions, and motivations (Yusliza et al., 2020).

This research has powerful benefits and implications for managers, leaders, and business owners especially those from public sector by enlightening for them about the use of competency-based trainings Models for HR to foster organizational competitiveness and profitability on the market. This research was a qualitative case study-based research which is primarily exploratory research, and the case study model provides an in-depth look at one test subject. In research, the subject can be an individual or family, business or association, or a town or city, and information is gathered from different sources and aggregated utilizing the subtleties to make a greater end (Shea, 2001). Qualitative research is utilized to increase comprehension of fundamental reasons, conclusions, and inspirations and it gives bits of knowledge into the issue or assists with creating thoughts or theories for potential quantitative research, it is additionally used to reveal inclines in thought and conclusions and jump further into the issue (Agyem, 2018; Hammarberg et al., 2016). In fact, ONATEL will be the research case study as one of the institutions that show a very stagnant development in Burundi.

When companies' complete organization-wide competency assessments, they are able to identify competency gaps that impede short and long-term strategic results. Once competency gaps are identified, HR professionals are positioned to make better decisions when it comes to recruitment, hiring, onboarding, performance management, compensation planning, and succession planning. When employees have a deep understanding of their strengths and weaknesses the competencies where

they are lag or excel, they are better able to focus their development efforts to improve their shortcomings. In this research, the researcher will discuss various methods to help employees gain insight into their competencies and areas for improvement. Once competency assessments are completed, managers are also equipped with extensive insight to discuss career paths and development plans so employees can advance in their careers and reach their highest potential (Prabawati et al., 2018).

Human Resources (HR) is a very important factor in an organization so that human resources are required to have the ability, skill or competence in order to be able to carry out the vision and mission of the organization (Segoro, 2013). Competence includes a number of attributes attached to the individual which is a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that can be used as a mean to improve performance. Concerned to the demands of human resources that should have the knowledge, skills or abilities, it is necessary to the development of human resources in public organizations. One form of human resource development is Competency-Based Training (CBT). CBT focuses on three issues, namely skills, competencies, and competency standard. There are 5 (five) strategies in the implementation of CBT, namely: organizational scanning, strategic planning, competency profiling, competency gap analysis, and competency development. Finally, through CBT the employees within the organization can reduce or eliminate the differences between existing performance with a potential performance that can

improve the knowledge, expertise, and skills that are very supportive in achieving the vision and mission of the organization (Prabawati et al., 2018).

Public sector development (PSD) promotes synergies between governance and development. It focuses on advancing good governance, improving public service delivery, promoting the use of information and communication technology (ICT), and developing leadership and human resource management capacities, and competencies have been used the most in connection with the private business sector. Managerial functions can be similar or generic across private and public sector, but the conditions in these two sectors are very different, while the similarities and differences of both organizations (private and public) have been drawn and analyzed based on certain basic concepts of organization that include goals, goods and services, resource ownership, organization structure and design, leadership and managership, decision making and organization culture (Anisur et al., 2016).

Noordegraaf and Van Doreen (2020) stated that the context in which public sector leaders utilize categories of the framework and determine the diversities in competencies make it rampant in developing if not stagnant. In this study, managerial competencies were derived from observations of 12 public managers in action and they underlined three groups of competencies of public managers namely, interpretive competencies, institutional competencies and textual competencies. The specificity of the competent public sector leader is his ability to operate successfully in an environment that is unstable due to political situation. Virtanen (2000) also asked the question what competencies public managers need to be able to operate efficiently,

effectively and competently? Virtanen (2000) constructed his own framework consisting of five competence areas for public managers, namely task competence, professional competence in subject area, professional competence in administration, political competence, and ethical competence and the majority of these competencies are the same as a manager in the private sector must have to cope with the daily business.

The difference again is that in the private sector the manager's agenda is set by market and board of directors, while Politicians and public leaders make the agenda for the manager in the public sector. Public management and management of private sector are getting more and more similar. Competencies framework in private sector brings a lot of advantage for HR management, managers, organization and employees as well especially as a: tool making the connection between hiring, evaluation and development; tool providing the clear expectations of organization from employees; tool ensuring the unique communication; tool of high professionalism in HR management. These are the reasons why it should be used in public sector as well (Hugrée et al., 2015).

Therefore, it is due to the above facts that public service/sector leaders and managers need to understand fully the usefulness of competency-based training that brings or improves employees' capacity and ability to perform their jobs and this research will illuminate the power of this crucial element in the organizational development process for either public or private. Competency-based training is used to develop valuable characteristics and skillsets in individuals, leading to greater

employability and life-long learning. It's also known as mastery-based learning, proficiency-based learning or performance-based education. It requires a well-designed framework at its core. Competency frameworks are based on key 'competencies' (behaviors, skills, knowledge and attributes) that enable employees to do their job effectively. In competence-based training, these competencies become the basis of what is taught and assessed (Garavan & McGuire, 2001). Defining key competencies in a specific, measurable way gives learners a clear picture of the path they need to follow to become masters of that skill. After creating the framework, programmes of study detailing learner progression, appropriate teaching and learning approaches, assessment practices and quality assurance processes, learner support, and more, are designed (OECD, 2008). This research will be useful or beneficial to academicians because they will have insights on the importance of research on CBT, it will also help them to know or get more skills, knowledge and information about what they learn or teach in class and what really happens on the field. This research will also be useful practically because HR practitioners will be updates on the importance of CBT in public and private sector organizations.

1.2 Problem statement

The problem of the study is What does make the public sector not innovating in their field or not progressing and How CBT Models can be used to solve those issues and make organization improve and develop significantly? The study came up with this problem statement because of the current situation of the economy in

Burundi, particularly in the public sector does not progress, even if the investment is availed. Therefore, through this study, the researcher is going to analyze the challenges caused by the non-development of the public sector. Therefore, the solutions that may cause the rebound of this sector, and some methods of management and training will be discussed, so that a way of development of this sector can be found.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This research aims to analyze which factors are making Onatel not innovating, not improving or renewing their field. This study aims to underline and explore what is lacking, and how Onatel can implement a new system of Human Resource Management by developing the competencies of employees working for the Public sector. According to OECD (2017) developing the skills of public employees is important in order to continuously improve and adapt the competencies of the workforce and build human capital. Burundian government and many others could benefit from competency-based management and the use of common job profiles. These are the tools to advanced strategic orientation. Competency based management influences all the key HRM areas: planning, recruiting, training, development and mobility. Competency framework would help Burundian government to identify competency gaps and strategies to fill them. This research aims at:

- a. Analyzing the factors that make organizations get stagnant in innovation, development and productivity.

- b. Underline and explore how Onatel can implement a new training system/model (CBT) to Human Resource Management by developing the competencies of employees working for Onatel.

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings and results from this research will have both theoretical and practical significant and benefits to all workers in the public sector, by looking back on their work, and adding the missing part on the puzzle, by starting to implement a Human Resource Management system that can bring into the sector Competency Based-Models for the improving of the skills of the employee, and therefore for the sector, and for the country. Likewise, this study will make everyone aware with the scope and situation of the public sector in Burundi and how the fact that they don't innovate or improve their sector make the economy of the country slow, and therefore block the population's economic development. It will also be beneficial to academicians because it is an interesting topic of research, and students and lecturers will be attracted to conducted researches on CBT and HRM to harness what they learn or teach and connect them to what happens after class.

The study aims to demonstrate and remind public institutions (*Ministries, Education, government*) to change or to improve their Management, Human Resource Management system and start investing in Human capital, start investing in their employees in such training, studying... Furthermore, the study will help the governments of Burundi to change Management policies in the public sector toward

digital practice as well as to re-promote and facilitate training in organizations so as to keep employees updated with their career and updated skills and knowledge.

Lastly, the research will demonstrate the necessity and role of public Organizations in the development of a country and therefore of the population career development. Managers should be hired because of their qualifications, competences, skills, training, and experience. This will have a direct effect on service delivery, as the managers will have the drive, passion, and knowledge to provide quality service delivery. Current managers should be provided with opportunities to develop their ability to express and control their emotions through training.

1.5 Research Questions

A research question is the fundamental core of a research project, study, or review of literature. It focuses the study, determines the methodology, and guides all stages of inquiry, analysis, and reporting. Specifying the research question is one of the first methodological steps the investigator has to take when undertaking research. The research question must be accurately and defined. Choosing a research question is the central element of both quantitative and qualitative research and in some cases, it may precede construction of the conceptual framework of the study. In all cases, it makes the theoretical assumptions in the framework more explicit, most of all it indicates what the researcher wants to know most and first.

So, this research will try to answer the following research question:

1. How Competency-Based Training models can contribute to the rebound of ONATEL through human resources management?