Assessing the Relationship Between Hiring Practice and Quality Service Delivery in Counties of the Lake Region Economic Bloc Kenya

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Citation: Gordon Odongo Olala, Geoffrey Kimutai, and Christopher Ngacho (2022) Assessing the Relationship Between Hiring Practice and Quality Service Delivery in Counties of the Lake Region Economic Bloc Kenya, *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol.10, No.5, pp.33-46

ABSTRACT: Human Resource management practices like hiring is some of the practices which made County governments in Kenya to be inaugurated in the year 2013 to help deliver quality services. Since then, it has been evident that County governments have been experiencing a myriad of problems that constrain their delivery capabilities. This study aimed at assessing the relationship between hiring practice and quality service Delivery in Lake Region economic bloc county governments in Kenya. This study was anchored on objective factor theory supported by expectancy and human capital theories. The study used an explanatory design. The target population was nine hundred and eighty-five counties resource officials. A sample size of 356 through Yamane''s (1979) sample size formula at a 95% confidence level, p=0.5 formula was used. Stratified and simple random sampling was applied. Data collection was through questionnaire. Results for the objective, hiring practice was positively significant in relationship to quality service delivery. The study recommended that, County government should always engage professional associations in hiring process and ensure appropriate hiring methods.

KEYWORDS: quality, service, delivery, hiring, management

INTRODUCTION

Hiring Practices

Hiring can be defined as actions an organization takes to attract potential candidates with the necessary skills for actual employment. Hiring is also known as a process of identifying candidate qualifications, attributes, and characteristics to determine their suitability for the advertised job. It means to pick and choose out among the selected candidates. Hiring is a key in influencing on organizational performance (Florea & Mihai, 2014). Underperformance of employees and inability to cope with new challenges influences

organizational productivity, so this means there is a positive relationship between proper hiring practice and productivity in Organizations (Ukpafe, 2014). Factors influencing the hiring process in Small and Medium enterprises are said to be, relevant experience, education, and salary requirements which generally determine who to be hired in an organization (Okusolubo, Grobler & Joubert, 2016). Factors such as work experience, academic qualifications, interviews, and tests are used in selecting employees to determine effective hiring practices (Djabatey, 2012).

The recruitment and selection practices will determine who is hired, which may shape employee behaviour in an origination. If correctly designed properly, it will detect proficient candidates and precisely pair them to the job. The use of the accurate selection device will increase the likelihood of the right person being hired to fill a slot in the organization (Gamage, 2014). The impact of recruitment and selection criteria on organizational performance, has substantial consequences on an organization"s performance, where the more unbiased the selection criteria are, the better the organization hires the best employees for performance (Ekwoaba, Ugochukwu & Ufoma 2015).

Statement of Problem

County governments in Kenya are expected to continuously find measures that can enable them raise service delivery standards through practicing appropriate Human Resource management practices like hiring practice to efficiently deliver Quality services like infrastructure development, water, electricity, efficient health services, and education services. Nevertheless, it has been evident that County governments in Kenya have been experiencing a myriad of problems which include and are not limited to nepotism, mismanagement, inappropriate working environment, and key appointments done based on political referrals and affiliation (Collins & Druten, 2013).

Since the inauguration of Public Service Boards in 2013, not much empirical evaluation of their Hiring as human Resource Management practice role in achieving quality service objectives has been attempted, and this has led to the little known extent to which Human Resource Management agencies within the forty-seven (47) counties in Kenya have facilitated Hiring practice of staff for Quality service delivery. Research also indicates that over fifty-one per cent (51%) of citizens are dissatisfied with service delivery of key services offered by Counties like infrastructure development, water, electricity, and provision of health and education services (Transparency International, 2019).

This indicates that there is a need for County Governments to improve hiring practice as human resource management practice, in relation to Quality service delivery. County Governments have witnessed a poor performance by successive governments due to weak governance of public institutions across the nation, and therefore, it is important to improve this level of service delivery; in order to do so, there is a need first to investigate the what is making the level of service delivery being unsatisfactory (Kerubo & Muturi, 2019)

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this study was:

(i). To determine the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments Kenya.

Hypothesis

The study sought to test the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in Lake Region Economic Bloc County GovernmentsKenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hiring practice and Quality Service delivery

Florea and Mihai (2014), in their study of the influence of internal and external factors on recruitment and selection performance using the Kalman filter in the United Kingdom, defined hiring as those actions that an organization takes to attract potential candidates with the necessary skills for employment. They furthered that hiring is also a process of identifying candidate qualifications, attributes, and characteristics to determine their suitability for the advertised job. Which means to pick and choose out of the rest, and they concluded that recruitment and selection are key to influencing organizational performance; however, the study did not specifically address how hiring practice may relate to service delivery in county governments.

Oaya *et al.* (2017), in the study Impact of Recruitment and Selection Strategy on Employees" Performance: A Study of Three Selected Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria, a descriptive survey research design, opined that the process of searching the candidates to fill in identified vacant and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization is known as recruitment while hiring involves the series of steps by which the candidates are screened in order to choose the most suitable persons for vacant positions. The basic aim of recruitment is to create a collection of talented candidates to enhance the selection and hiring of the best candidates for the organization by attracting more and more prospective employees to apply to the organization, while the basic purpose of the selection process is to choose the right candidate to be hired in the different positions in the organization. The recruitment process is immediately followed by the selection process, where the final interviewers and the decision-makers make the decision and the official hiring.

Ekwoaba *et al.* (2015), in their study through survey research design Nigeria, argued that the process of hiring starts with attracting and identifying potential candidates existing within and outside the organization to begin evaluating them for future employment; hiring begins when the appropriate or right caliber of candidates are identified and given job opportunity. The study furthered that most processes have elements of personal judgment inherent in them, but treating job applicants in a professional and positive manner is more

likely to leave them with a positive view of the organization. The study concluded that the process is a serious business in any organization for efficiency in service delivery. This study, however, only addressed processes in various organizations and not in county governments. Also, the study was a descriptive design, while the current study was an explanatory design

Genc (2014), in the study of environmental factors affecting human resource activities of Turkish firms, a survey design opined that in the other hand, culture, and traditions might distress the hiring processes and decision making in a situation where the perceptions and attitudes of the senior management team are subjective due to local culture. Legislation and regulations have impacts on every function and activity of a firm in the selection and recruitment. Human Resource Management practices should be consistent with the organization's strategy. The size of an organization commands the style used for hiring, the number of employees required, timelines, and tools used to recruit and hire. The horizontal organizational structures, as compared to vertical, provide more flexibility to the process of recruitment and hiring. In contrast, this study addressed hiring practice in relation to quality service delivery in County Government, where hiring practices were tested on whether they affect service delivery in county government.

Habib *et al.* (2010), In the study of factors affecting the recruitment and selection process of private commercial banks in Bangladesh where multivariate analysis techniques were used, noted that appropriateness in the hiring process for the desired effect of the private commercial banks in Bangladesh settled that the environmental influences that upset the banks" performance resulting into the development and growth of these banks where the influences coming from the recruiters" attitude, candidates understanding and mind-set for getting jobs sometimes, pressure from top officials from the monitoring bank, external factors like social, political, legal and economic. Their outcome also indicated that factors like directors" instructions and the capability of the recruiter to project the interviews effectively have a great influence on the hiring activities in the private commercial banks in Bangladesh. The study looked at the factors affecting recruitment and selection , including hiring but did not address how hiring practice is related to performance or service delivery in organizations the gap which this study addressed.

A research carried out by Al-Qudah *et al.* (2014) on the effect of human resource management practices on employee performance Malaysia institute, a descriptive survey design, confirmed a significant association between recruitment, selection and hiring practices and employee performance with a positive relationship effect. Compelling research has established the impact of human resource management practices on employee and corporate performance; these practices include the hiring process, which provides policies and structures through which performance is realized and improved. Human resources are exceptional resources attained through the process of recruitment, selection and hiring procedures. This study, however, looked at recruitment practices, selection, and hiring but not how hiring practices affect service delivery in county government.

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Mufu (2015) carried out a research on recruitment and selection in the National Oil Refinery Company in Cameroon; an exploratory case study showed that company recruitment was based on a befitting personality and competencies of the candidates but hiring the right candidates is affected by discrimination and corruption which affect proper implication of these practices; however, this study was carried out in oil company in Cameroon not in County Governments in Kenya especially Lake region economic Bloc Counties which current study addressed.

Adu-Darkoh (2014) conducted a study on "employee recruitment and selection practices in the construction industry in Ashanti Region. The study used a cross-sectional survey design for data collection and analysis. This study revealed that firms' recruitment and selection practice and hence hiring has a relationship with their performances.

Ukpafe (2014) in Onyaeghala & Hyacinth (2016) conducted a study on the effect of the recruitment and selection process on the productivity of manufacturing firms in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design. The findings of the study were that: underperformance of employees and inability to cope with new challenges or changes had a negative influence on organizational productivity. The study equally found that there is a positive relationship between recruitment and hiring process and productivity, although this study was not carried out to compare county governments' service delivery and hiring practice which this study addressed.

Okusolubo, Grobler, and Joubert (2016) carried out research on the effect of the selection process on employee turnover in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Sunnyside, Pretoria". A descriptive survey design was employed in the study, and findings revealed that: factors influencing the selection and hiring process in SMEs were relevant experience, education, relocation, and salary requirement; hiring practices of county government in Kenya were never addressed in the study which the current study addressed.

Djabatey (2012) conducted a study on organizations' recruitment and selection practices, the case of HFC Bank (GH) Ltd. The study adopted a descriptive design, and findings revealed that factors such as work experience, academic qualifications, interviews, and tests used in selecting employees make the selecting and recruitment and hiring practices very effective for the purpose of carrying out good human resource management practices, however, this study did not show how hiring relates to service delivery in county government.

Ulasi (2011) researched Human Resource Management and productivity in the Nigerian public sector." A descriptive survey design was adopted. The study's major findings revealed that; Hiring processes affect the productivity of public sector workers. Ikwesi (2010) studied the effects of recruitment and hiring procedures on the efficiency of the public service in Nigeria, descriptive survey design was applied, and the major findings revealed that: recruitment and selection procedures in public service are not strictly

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followed; politicization and other informal processes dominate the established recruitment and selection procedures. Merit does not always count to secure employment in public service; rather, the use of federal character, quota system, indigene-ship, and son of the soil syndrome are mostly considered. However, this study was carried out in Nigeria, not in County governments in Kenya.

According to a study by Ong'iyo (2013) on the Employee recruitment and retention practices adopted by Barclays bank of Kenya, that indicated there are several factors influencing the employee recruitment, selection, and retention. The inspiration encompasses accessibility of qualified staff, pay attractiveness, the external work atmosphere, the firm's recruitment procedures, and others. The main influences of employee retention encompass job satisfaction, circumstances of service, the organization's commitment to employees, salary and benefits, opportunities for training and development, staff welfare, gender sensitivity, conflict management system, work arrangement flexibility, responsibilities, and commitment outside the organization and employee attachment to the organization. This study was conducted in the private sector, whereas the current study was conducted in county governments on the relationship between hiring and quality service delivery, especially Lake Region economic Bloc counties.

Kemunto (2012), in the study on factors influencing recruitment strategies employed by small businesses in Kitale Municipality, sought to establish the factors that influence the recruitment strategies which were employed by small businesses in Kitale Municipality descriptive survey study design where a sample population of 33 businesses partook to the study. The study's findings exhibited that majority of the small businesses in Kitale municipality use internal sources of hiring such as promotion and referrals. The outcome of the study further specified that culture, economic conditions, size, the financial position of a business, corporate strategy, social influences, technological advancements, and government/legal frameworks influence the choice of recruitment strategies by small businesses in Kitale, but to varying levels where this study was anchored on SME, not county governments.

Cheboror (2016) on the study effect of devolved HR functions on employee performance, where independent variables were measured in terms of county human resource strategy, county policy on attrition and turnover, and county human resource needs, while employee performance was measured in terms of expected behavior and task-related aspects, opined that After the transfer of management of human resources to devolved functions was effected in January 2014 in Kenya, a number of challenges have been observed which include: Discrimination, nepotism, tribalism, cronyism patronage, and victimization in the hiring of county staff. These challenges experienced by county governments in Kenya, are a result of unprofessional hiring of human resource in the county governments. Hiring practice follow the county governments' policies, needs, and strategies as recommended by

the transition report to curd unprofessionalism which is currently not the case (Transition Authority Report 2015).

The County Governments have had a huge labour workforce as a result of hiring of new staff without consulting the relevant departments at national or central government offices. While some investigations have been initiated in different countries, the literature highlights that most studies examining the relationship between HRMP and service delivery have been conducted on organizations, mostly in developed countries. Despite gains, the extent of benefits in regard to the effect they have on employee delivery in Government is yet to be examined. This research, therefore, aimed in filling the gap by evaluating the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in the Lake Region Economic Block County governments; hence there is no statistically significant relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in the lake region economic bloc county government Kenya

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the independent variable was the conceptualized hiring practice in Lake Region Economic Block County governments. The dependent variable of the study was Quality Service delivery. This study assessed the relationship between hiring practice as human resource management practice with quality service delivery in counties of the lake region economic bloc of Kenya.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 indicates the conceptual framework of independent variable (hiring) and Dependent Variable Quality Service Delivery

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is an approach used to understand and also to translate facts achieved outcomes during conducting of the research (Mackenzie *et al.*, 2006, cited by Bana, 2017). According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), the research philosophy anticipates the role of the assumptions we make about the way the world works, what different philosophies are considered as being acceptable knowledge, and the role of our own values and research paradigms. In this case, the philosophy that guided this research study is positivism philosophy, as supported by Wagana (2017), who also used the same in the research study.

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This is a philosophy that allows the researcher to make various assumptions. Such assumptions may include operation within agreed norms and practices, as well as the idea that it is possible to distinguish between more and less conceivable claims that science may not provide all the answers

Research Design

The study adopted an explanatory research design. The Explanatory research design was suitable because the study was mainly concerned with quantifying a relationship or comparing groups purposely to identify a cause-effect relationship, and this focused on explaining the effect of the study in a detailed manner. This was supported by Wagana (2017) to help identify, analyze, and describe the relationship between Hiring practice and quality service delivery in the lake region economic bloc counties.

Study Area

Lake Region economic bloc is one of the most densely populated regions of Kenya with over 12 million people which constitute about 30% of the total population of Kenya's population. The counties that constitute the Lake Region Economic Bloc includes, Bungoma, Busia, Homa Bay, Kakamega, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori, Nyamira, Siaya, Trans Nzoia, Kericho, Bomet and Vihiga. These Counties have similar ecological zones and natural resources they have analogous cultural histories that date back to historical migrations and trading routes. The Counties in the Lake region Economic Bloc are dominated by Abaluhya tribes, Luos tribes and Kalenjins tribe forming approximately 80% of the total population in the region that is approximately 9.7 million. Lake Region Economic Bloc is made up of territories from the Western part of the Country Kenya with size of (24,800.2 Km²). The region lies between latitudes 1016'N and 1054'S and longitudes 330 55' and 350 51'E and the equator passes across the region. The climate of the region is generally mild with monthly temperature ranging between 19 and 25 degrees Celsius throughout the year. The rainfall is governed by a modified equatorial climate characterized by long rains (March to June) and short rains (September to November). Lake Region Economic Bloc Counties were specifically selected for this study due to their dense population compared to other regions in Kenya. This is a justification of why the study was conducted in this Bloc.

Target Population

Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) observed that the target population refers to that reference population for which the researcher wishes to draw generalizations and from which the study population is drawn. The target population for the present study was therefore included; resource officials drawn from selected departments of Lake Region economic bloc counties and they were nine hundred and eighty-five officers (985).

Sample Size

The purpose of sampling is to gain an understanding bout some features or attributes of the whole population based on the characteristics of the sample. Sampling involves drawing a

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target population for observation. It is appropriate when it is not feasible to involve the entire population under study. In this study, Yamane's (1972) sample size formula at a 95% confidence level, P = 0.5, was used where the sample size of employees were arrived at three hundred and fifty six (356) including eighty percent (80%) response rate provision

Data Analysis and Findings

Hiring practices

A total of 11 items were used to explore the respondent's views on the employee's perception of hiring practice. The overall mean response score on hiring practice was 2.77, and a standard deviation of 0.91. This value lies in the interval, which implies that respondents appeared to agree with hiring practice on quality service delivery in the County governments.

Correlation analysis of hiring practices and quality service delivery

Pearson's moment correlation was used to establish the influence of hiring practices and quality service delivery. There was a significant positive and weak relationship between hiring practices (r= 0.510, p = 0.000) and quality service delivery, as shown in Table 1. Therefore, an improvement in hiring practices led to an improvement in quality service delivery.

Items		Quality service	
		delivery	
Hiring practices	Pearson Correlation	0.510^{**}	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Hiring Practices and Quality Service Delivery

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=318

Quality Service Delivery

A total of 18 items were used to explore the respondent's views on the employee's perception of quality service delivery. The overall mean response score on Quality service delivery was 3.77, and a standard deviation of 0.66. This value lies in the interval, which implies that respondents appeared to agree on quality service delivery in the County government.

Regression analysis on hiring practices and quality service delivery

A linear regression model was used to explore the effect of hiring practices and quality service delivery. From the model, (R2 = 0.260) indicated that hiring practices account for 26% variation in quality service delivery. The R2 represented the measure of variability in quality service delivery that hiring practices account for. The hiring practices predictor

Global Journal of Human Resource Management
Vol.10, No.5, pp.33-46, 2022
Print ISSN: 2053-5686(Print),
Online ISSN: 2053-5694(Online)
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used in the model captured the variation in the quality of service delivery as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Regression Analysis on Hiring and Quality Service Delivery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.510 ^a	.260	.258	.55917

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hiring practices

8.5 Analysis of Variance in hiring practices and quality service delivery

The analysis of variance was used to test whether the model could significantly fit in predicting the outcome than using the mean, as shown in (Table 3). The regression model with hiring practices as a predictor was significant (F=110.99, p-value =0.000), showing that there was a significant relationship between hiring practices and quality service delivery

Table 3: Analysis of Variance in Hiring Practices and Quality Delivery

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.704	1	34.704	110.99	.000 ^b
	Residual	98.805	316	.313		
	Total	133.509	317			

a. Dependent Variable: Quality service delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Hiring practices

Hiring practices and quality service delivery coefficients

From the findings, the t-test associated with β -values was significant, and the hiring practices predictor made a significant contribution to the model. The coefficients result in Table 4 showed that the predicted parameter in relation to the independent factor was significant ($\beta 1 = 0.365$; P<0.05). The study hypothesized that there was no statistically significant relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery. In testing this hypothesis, the hiring practice variable was regressed with the quality service delivery variable. The study findings depicted that there was a significant positive relationship between hiring practices results in an increase in quality service delivery. Since the *p* < 0.05, the null hypothesis (**Ho1**) was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that hiring practices had a significant influence on quality service delivery. This implies that for every improvement in hiring practices, there is a corresponding improvement in quality service delivery.

Global Journal of Human Resource Management

Vol.10, No.5, pp.33-46, 2022

Print ISSN: 2053-5686(Print),

Online ISSN: 2053-5694(Online)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Τ	Sig.
	-	В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.764	.101		27.398	.000
	Hiring practices	.365	.035	.510	10.535	.000

Table 4: Hiring practices and quality service delivery coefficients

a. Dependent Variable: Quality service delivery

DISCUSSIONS

Relationship between hiring practices and Quality service delivery

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments. Pearson's moment correlation was used to establish the influence of hiring practice on quality service delivery. There was a significant positive and weak relationship between hiring practices (r= 0.510, p =0.000) and quality service delivery. Therefore, an improvement in hiring practices led to an improvement in quality service delivery. From the linear model, ($R^2 = .260$) indicated that hiring practices account for 26% variation in quality service delivery. There was a significant positive relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery (β_1 =0.365 and p=0.000). A rise in hiring practices led to an increase in quality service delivery. Since the *p* < 0.05, the null hypothesis (**Ho**₁) was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that hiring practices had a significant influence on quality service delivery. This implies that for every increase in hiring practices, there is a corresponding improvement in quality service delivery.

Implications of Research Findings and Recommendations

In the study, recommendation for hiring Practice was handled. The recommendations given by the study will act as a basis for both the academicians and practitioners in Human Resource management as it aid in filling the gap identified in the context of assessing the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in lake region economic bloc county governments in Kenya and beyond.

Theoretical Implications for the study

This study assessed the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in Lake Region economic bloc counties Kenya, where the study adopted three theories as objective factor theory being the main study theory, which opined that hiring choice and other human resource practices are subjected on the objective examination of certain touchable components that exist within the organization. These factors, as pronounced by the theory, include the size of the organization, pay of the employees in the organization, benefits, policies and practices, organizational image, structure, and work environment. The theory, therefore, implies that specific personal performance is paged on ownership of requisite capabilities, skills and high innate

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impetus. The implication of the theory is that it is important for organizations to implement appropriate Hiring practice that promote extraordinary abilities for quality service delivery; as seen in this study that hiring practice, has a significant relationship to quality service delivery. That is improvements of hiring practice hence lead to improvements of quality service delivery in Organization.

The second theory which is supporting theory is the Expectancy theory. This theory has three main motivational forces, mainly valence, instrumentality and expectancy. Valence denotes the value and hence attractiveness of the outcomes. Instrumentality refers to the level at which the improvement in job performance is expected to lead to the desired outcomes (Public satisfaction). Finally, expectancy means the degree to which an increase in effort results in an improved job outcome. The implication of this theory is that performance/service delivery related work is achieved when there is a clear link between performance/service delivery and appropriate hiring. The third theory which also a supporting theory, was the human capital theory, whose implication to this study was that it responds to any stock of knowledge and it focuses on providing a better understanding of inner characteristics such as behaviors, abilities, skills and experience that employees should possess that leads to quality service delivery.

Managerial Implications

The contribution of management practices in the effective implementation of hiring practice is a key to the success of the organizations. As revealed by the findings of the study that there was a positive significant relationship between hiring practice, with quality service delivery. The management should consider the value of hiring practice not only as vital practices but also as one of the important determinants of organizational quality service delivery, and this can only be achieved when the County governments managements use professionalism in their hiring process and make sure that they embrace all human resource practices required and adopt right criteria in the policy document to bring employees into the county governments.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study concluded that hiring practices had a positive significant influence on quality service delivery.

Recommendation for future Research

This study sought to assess the relationship between hiring practice and quality service delivery in Lake Region economic bloc county governments. Future studies should be carried out in other Economic blocks such as North Rift, Central or Coast and make a comparison with current findings. This study focused only on hiring practice, but future studies should look into the other practices.

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Global Journal of Human Resource Management

Vol.10, No.5, pp.33-46, 2022

Print ISSN: 2053-5686(Print),

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