

Determining the Relationship between Performance Assessment and Employee Performance in Rwanda, Nyagatare District Local Government

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Abstract: This study sought to determine the relationship between performance assessment and employee performance in Rwanda, Nyagatare District Local Government. The researcher adopted a cross-sectional design using a sample of 131 respondents. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analyses. It was established that performance assessment positively significantly predicted employee performance. It was hence concluded that performance assessment from colleagues and the public significantly influences employee performance. It was thus recommended that government agencies including local governments other organisations should promote performance assessment by colleagues and public as priorities in employee assessment.

Key words: performance assessment, employee performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Organisations have apparently prospered based on their existing human resources. Human resources are probably the only resource that must be available for the organization to function, the size or quality of human resource notwithstanding (Obong'o, 2014). It is important that business owners and employers realise the essential role played by this resource and the success that is brought thereby in terms of skills and abilities that they exhibit (Price, 2007).

Theoretical Review

The theory that underpinned this study was the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory which the hygiene and motivation factors theory. This theory which according to Chandan (2010) unveils certain factors in that cause job satisfaction leading to job performance, and a separate set of factors that cause dissatisfaction will be the basis of this study. Akrani (2010) states that Herzberg's theory of motivation is also called 'Two Factor Theory', 'Dual Factor Theory' and 'Hygiene/Maintenance Theory of Motivation'. Akrani (2010) points out that according to Herzberg, the Hygiene Factors do little contribution to provide job satisfaction. Herzberg called these factors "dissatisfiers" as their absence cause dissatisfaction but their presence is not motivating but only prevent dissatisfaction. The hygiene factors meet man's needs to avoid unpleasantness but do not motivate them to take more interest in the work. Hygiene factors when provided create a favourable environment for motivation and prevent job dissatisfaction. They are related to the conditions under which

a job is performed. When employer is unable to provide enough of these factors to his employees, there will be job dissatisfaction. However, if they are provided, they will not necessarily act as motivators. They will just lead employees to experience no job dissatisfaction. Such hygiene factors are; company's policies and administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations with superiors and other subordinates, salary, job security, status, personal life, and employee benefits.

Regarding the motivating factors, these act as forces of job satisfaction. They create positive and a longer lasting effect on employee's performance and are related to work itself. Accordingly, adequate provision of such factors, the 'Satisfiers' makes people happy with their jobs because they serve man's basic needs for psychological growth. In addition, they also motivate employees in their work. These factors are achievement, recognition for accomplishment, increased responsibility, opportunity for growth and development, and creative and challenging work. Motivating factors motivate subordinates to take more interest in the work. They raise efficiency and productivity of employees. According to Herzberg (1959) motivating factors are essential in order to provide job satisfaction and in order to maintain a high level of job performance. Employees will not have job satisfaction if the motivating factors are not provided in sufficient quality by the employer. This theory identified HRD as part of motivating factors that enhanced employee job performance. This theory thus helped in relating HRD to employee performance.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are different scholars that have performance assessment and employee performance. Ford et al. (2014) indicate that employee performance assessment as a development approach this involves the collecting of information and providing feedback to employees about their behaviour, communication skills styles and skills. Self report information as well as information from peers, managers and customers can be collected. Although an individual's awareness of their strength and weaknesses can be considered development, performance assessments typically stimulate a person to engage in other types of developmental activities designed to strengthen skills, behaviours or attitudes. Typically employees

are provided with a summary of their strength and weaknesses, as seen by different rating groups which they can use to direct development activities. Kipchumba (2014) studied effectiveness of the 360-degrees appraisal tool in human resource practice in Kenya with employee of the Municipal Council of Nakuru as the units of analysis. 360-degrees was conceptualised as performance assessment that involved feedback from multiple sources such as the employee's superiors, colleagues, subordinates, sometimes customers, suppliers and/ or spouses. Descriptive and chi-square results revealed a significant relationship between the organisational use of 360 degrees appraisal tool and performance which also implies effectiveness. The findings indicated that that the 360-degree appraisal tool enabled setting of clear and specific goals, it enables organisation have measurement to determine the outcomes, enables determination of degree at which outcomes were achieved, enables identification of skills, competencies and behaviours to as to achieve goals, measures proficiency and skills in practices, enables performance assessment of where there is need for change, can create development plans that increase capabilities and performance and can also performance assessment of environment that can bring out the best from everyone.

On his part, Kaur (2013) in a critical review studied the benefits of 360 degrees performance appraisal. The findings of the study revealed that 360 degrees appraisal gives chance to all levels of employees to give their input and contribute towards achievement of the organisation goal. Thus 360 degrees feedback helps the individuals to get a broader perspective of how other perceive them and thus it motivates them to work harder towards achieving organizational goal. Selvarajan and Cloninger (2011) investigated how performance appraisals could motivate employees to improve performance with employees of a Mexican city as units of analysis. Their correlation results revealed that performance appraisals from multiple sources in the Mexican context positively related to perceived accuracy of appraisals. Regression analysis thus showed that appraisals from multiple sources predicted employee performance and perceived fairness and accuracy predicted higher levels of motivation to improve performance in the future. Ahmad and Bujang (2013) reviewed issues and challenges in the practice of performance appraisal activities in the 21st century. Their study revealed that establishing the standard be followed during appraisal motivate individuals or a group to a higher level of personal work behaviour. Akinbowale, Lourens and Jinabhai (2013) investigated the role of performance appraisal policy and its effects on employee performance in a critical review. The findings of the study showed that performance appraisal results in improvement in employee performance. Accordingly, feedback, particularly on interpersonal (supervisor-subordinate) basis will be found to be useful and highly effective in motivating employees to improve their performance.

Performance assessment is a continuous process whereby a rater will judge and evaluate their rates. Although raters review performance after three, six, nine months or at the end of the year, ratees are still being observed consistently (Ahmad &Bujang, 2013). Employers and employees that embrace continuous performance review reap benefits. Continuous performance review leads to the culture of learning and development (Aguinis, Joo&Gottfredson, 2011). Gavrea, Ilieş and Stegorean (2011) studied determinants of organisational on employees of manufacturing firms' performance in Romania. Using the canonical correlation they established a strong relationship between a continuous performance measurement process and performance.

Performance assessment should be viewed as a participative process which involves raters and ratees. This can be seen as a reciprocal process whereby the successfulness of the activity lies on the mutual and honest understanding between both raters and ratees (Ahmad &Bujang, 2013). Roberts (2003) carried out a study on employee performance appraisal system participation. The study revealed that appraisal participation provides employees with voice into the appraisal process. If employees are confident in the fairness of the appraisal process, they are more likely to accept performance ratings, even adverse ones, if they perceive a fair decision making process and this will enhance their work performance. Besides, a participatory appraisal interview style entails a strong emphasis on employee performance counselling. Therefore participatory systems facilitate the discussion of employee strengths and weaknesses in a positive context helping the employee improve his or her performance.

The studies above reveal there is a relationship between performance assessment and employee performance. However, contextual, methodological and empirical gaps arise in the above studies. At contextual level, all the above studies were largely carried outside the Ugandan context with the study by Kipchumba (2014) carried out in Kenya, study by Selvarajan and Cloninger (2011) carried out in Mexico and the study by Gavrea et al. (2011) in Romania. At methodological level, the study by the study by Akinbowale (2013) was a critical review carried out basing on related literature. At empirical level, all the studies studied performance assessment obliquely as performance appraisal. These gaps thus called for this empirical study in local governments in Rwanda .

Sample size determination and sampling method

A study sample of 131 respondents were purposively and systematically selected. This sample was arrived at using Krejcie& Morgan (1970).Using Simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods were used for the study because simple random sampling ensured that each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, thus giving each individual in the population the same probability of being chosen for the study (Onen, 2005) and Purposive sampling was used to select particular people to provide in-depth views

since the study was both quantitative and qualitative (Patton, 2003).

Data Analysis

Data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaire, interview guide and through documentary review. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS (21.0) while qualitative data was thematically integrated into quantitative results after content analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine whether there was the relationship between relationship between performance assessment and employee performance, a number of items investigating performance assessment were put to the respondents. The items studied included colleagues identified the areas that needed performance improvement, superiors informed staff on how to improve their performance, staff received comments from the

public on how they perform my job and whether staff considered the way their superiors assessed their performance to accurate. The items also included whether staff knew the standard followed by their superiors during performance assessment, received performance feedback at a personal level from their superiors, performance assessment was continuous and received counselling from superiors after assessment. The above items were scaled using the five-point Likert scale where code 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Basing on the five-point Likert scale that was used, the median score of three was considered undecided ($(1+2+3+4+5 = 15/5 = 3)$) while the mean above the median score indicated that the respondents agreed and the mean below median score indicated that the respondents disagreed. For each of the above items measuring risk assessment, descriptive statistics that include frequencies, percentages and means are presented. The results on the items are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies, Percentages and Means of Performance Assessment

Performance Assessment	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean
Colleagues identify the areas where my performance needs to improve	8* 6.5**	33 26.6	12 9.7	30 24.2	41 33.1	3.51
My superiors inform me on how I should improve my performance	21* 16.9**	30 24.2	-	48 38.7	25 20.2	3.21
I receive comments from the public on how I should perform my job	8* 6.5**	25 20.2	10 8.1	56 45.2	25 20.2	3.52
I consider the way my superiors assess my performance accurate	24* 19.4**	29 23.4	-	36 29.0	35 28.2	3.23
I know the standard followed by my superiors during performance assessment	14* 11.3**	39 31.5	-	52 41.9	19 15.3	3.19
Performance assessment of my performance is continuous	19* 15.3**	71 57.3	-	15 12.1	19 15.3	2.54
During performance assessment of my performance I receive counselling from my superiors	12* 9.7**	42 33.9	-	45 36.3	25 20.2	3.23

The results in Table 1 regarding whether colleagues identified the areas where staff performance needed to improve, cumulatively the majority percentage (57.3%) of the respondents agreed with 33.1% disagreeing and 9.7% were undecided. The mean = 3.51 which on the five-point Likert scale (from a minimum of 1 for the worst case scenario strongly disagree to a maximum of 5, which is the best case scenario strongly agree) that was used to measure responses was close to 4 which corresponded to agree. This means that the respondents agreed that colleagues identified the areas where staff performance needed to improve. It was revealed that in meetings, staff gave their opinion on the performance of projects. In the open responses, the respondents revealed that colleagues appraised fellow staff but this was informally. However, it was revealed that for the formal appraisal process, it was immediate supervisors that appraised colleagues. This meant that appraisal was mainly carried out by the superiors.

In relation to superiors informing staff how they should improve their performance, cumulatively the majority percentage (58.9%) of the respondents agreed and 41.1%

disagreeing. The mean = 3.21 was close to median score, three, meaning that the respondents were undecided. The mean close to median that is the average suggested that fairly, superiors informed staff how they should improve their performance. In the interviews the respondents revealed performance appraisal provided for performance evaluation feedback. The respondents revealed that during appraisal the superiors had to point out areas of weakness and what staff needed to do to improve performance. The above information was confirmed during document analysis. For instance, the preamble of PS FORM 5 shows that the appraisal process offers an opportunity to the Appraisee and Appraiser to dialogue and obtain a feedback on performance. This called for a participatory approach to the appraisal process and use of guidelines by all Public Officers in filling the form such that feedback about performance was provided.

With respect to whether staff received comments from the public on how they should perform their job, cumulatively the majority percentage (65.4%) of the respondents agreed with 26.7% disagreeing and 9.7% were undecided. The mean =

3.52 was close to 4 which corresponded to agree. This means that the respondents agreed that they received comments from the public on how they should perform their job. In the interviews, the respondents revealed that the public appraised staff of the district during “barazas – The Citizens forums (meetings) for interaction between the public, civil servants and politicians” that were mandatory. It was pointed out that in the barazas the public appraised the staff of the district through identifying out those staff whose services they appreciated or not. This means that the barazas were the means by which staff received comments from the public on how they should perform their job. Therefore, the findings of the study reveal that staff received comments from the public on how they should perform their job.

As regards to staff considering the way their superiors assessed their performance accurate, cumulatively the majority percentage (57.2%) of the respondents agreed with 42.8% disagreeing. The mean = 3.23 was close to median score, three, meaning that the respondents were undecided. The mean close to median that is the average suggested that fairly considered the accuracy of way their superiors assessed their performance as fair. In the interviews, the respondents revealed that the way performance of staff was assessed by superiors was accurate. The respondents revealed that this was because employees were appraised on predetermined key issues. Referring to PS FORM 5, it was shown that staff were appraised on professional knowledge/skills; planning, organising and coordinating; leadership; decision making; team work; initiative; communication; result orientation; integrity; human resource management; financial management; management of other resources (equipment & facilities); time management; customer care; loyalty; and any other relevant competence (PS FORM 5). In the In PS FORM 5, it was outlined that;

At the beginning of each assessment period, the Appraiser and Appraisee will agree on the key outputs for the assessment period. “The means by which performance shall be measured (Performance Indicators) and the minimum level of performance (performance targets) for each output shall be agreed upon. At the end of the assessment period, an appraisal meeting should be conducted by the Appraiser.

The above views mean that staff were appraised on predetermined key issues and thus staff considered the way their superiors assessed their performance accurate as fair.

As to whether staff knew the standard followed by their superiors during performance assessment, cumulatively the larger percentage (57.2%) of the respondents agreed with 42.8% disagreeing. The mean = 3.19 was close to median score, three, meaning that the respondents were undecided. The mean close to median that is the average suggested that fairly, staff knew the standard followed by their superiors

during performance assessment. In the interviews, it was revealed that staff knew the standard followed by their superiors because the standards for all public civil were outlined by policy. Accordingly, these included the setting of targets by both the appraiser and the appraisee; first the appraisee appraising self and then the appraiser giving his/ her opinion and different appraisers appraising one officer and then countersigning when the appraisee felt unfairly appraised, and needed opinions of an impartial official. In relation to the above, in PS FORM 5 it was stated;

This section is to be completed by the Appraisee, Appraiser and the counter signing Officers. It is a confirmation that there was agreement or if there was disagreement, it was resolved. It is also confirmation that the action plan to improve performance was discussed and agreed upon. The Appraisee / Appraiser / countersigning officer should use this section to comment about the job, career and any other relevant information.

The findings above reveal that the assessment standards are clearly stated and known to both the subordinates being appraised and the appraisers. However, in the open responses of the questionnaire survey, some respondents revealed that some appraisers did not follow reuses such as involving their subordinates while appraising. It was revealed that some superiors did not hold discussions with appraisees, refused to reveal the comments they put on the forms and even there were those who demanded appraisees to sign on the forms before the appraisers put their assessment comments on the forms. However, it can be deduced that officially, staff knew the standard followed by their superiors during performance assessment.

As regards performance assessment of staff being continuous, cumulatively the larger percentage (72.6%) of the respondents disagreed with 27.4% agreeing. The mean = 2.54 was below the medium score, three, which corresponded to undecided. The mean below the average suggested that performance assessment of staff performance to a lesser extent was continuous. In the interviews, the respondents also revealed that the process of appraisal was not continuous. The respondents revealed that the appraisal process was an annual process with each employee required to participate in this process to give the summation of the individual’s annual performance assessment. However, in the open responses, some few respondents revealed that the process was continuous. For instance, one respondent stated “Assessment is continuous since superiors do not wait for the end of the performance period, but continuously monitor how subordinates perform.” Indeed it was revealed that at the beginning of the financial year (FY), the supervisor and the supervisee sat and set targets on how to evaluate performance

and the cycle began afresh and this made the process continuous process. Overall, the results above reveal that the appraisal process was continuous to a lesser extent.

With regard to whether during performance assessment of staff performance they received counselling from their superiors, cumulatively the larger percentage (56.5%) of the respondents agreed with 43.6% disagreeing. The mean = 3.23 was close to median score, three, meaning that the respondents were undecided. The mean close to median that is the average suggested that fairly, during performance assessment of staff performance they received counselling from their superiors. In the interviews, it was revealed that normally during the assessment process, appraisers talked to staff on how to improve their performance through a feedback process. This means that performance assessment of staff involved some offering of counselling from superiors.

To establish the overall picture of how the respondents rated of how performance assessment for the district staff was carried out, an average index of performance assessment was computed for the eight items measuring performance assessment. The summary of the statistics on the same were the mean = 3.30 and a standard deviation = 0.712. The results show that the overall mean was average that is close to the median score, three, indicating that the respondents were there was performance assessment. This meant that the respondents rated performance assessment to be fair. The low standard deviation suggested low dispersion in the responses which suggested normal distribution of the results. Figure 1 presents a histogram indicating a largely normal distribution of the average index for performance assessment.

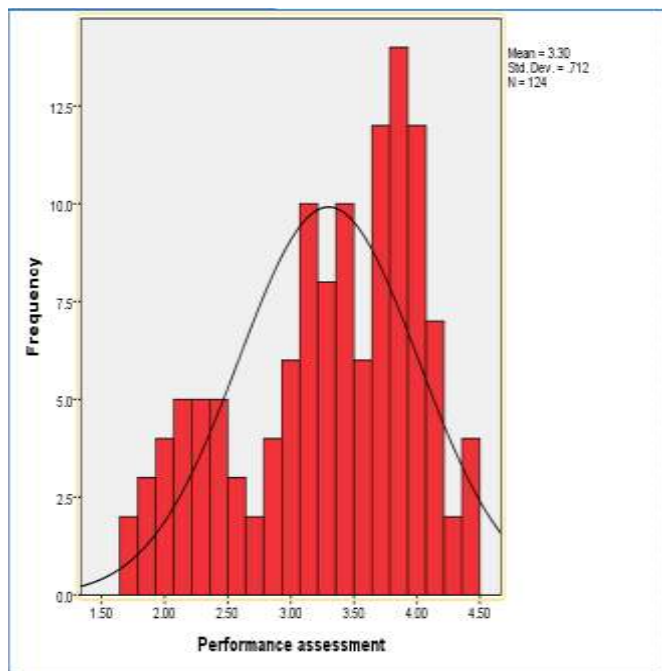


Figure 1: Histogram Indicating Distribution of Performance Assessment

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

It was concluded that, performance assessment from colleagues and the public significantly influences employee performance.

Recommendation

It was recommended that, government agencies including local governments other organisations should promote performance assessment by colleagues and public as priorities in employee assessment.

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