



Influence of Teamwork Practices on Employee Performance in Public Service in Kenya

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Abstract:

Teamwork is necessary to ensure democracy at the workplace, enhance change, encourage innovation and creativity, and allow for effective decision-making and networking. Teamwork involves forming teams which are expected to work coherently towards the realization of organizational goals. The aim of the study was to determine the influence of teamwork practices on employee performance in public service in Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The target group comprised of 126,998 employees drawn from twenty ministries in Kenya. The study used a sample of 225 out of whom 203 took part in the study. Since the target population was heterogeneous, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed during sample selection. Data collection was by means of a questionnaire which had close ended items. Validity of the research instrument was determined through content validity while reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha value. A score of 0.75 was attained thereby qualifying the research instrument as acceptable and reliable. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Quantitative responses based on Likert scale were coded in the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Processed data were then presented using simple frequencies and percentages, and summarized in Tables. The study concludes that teamwork ensures democracy at the workplace, enhances change, encourage innovation and creativity, and allow for effective decision-making and networking. The study recommends that organizations should enhance capacity building of employees and appraisal; prompt promotion of employees, provide higher remuneration and good rewards to higher achievers to enhance commitment and improvement in work environment; effective communication and involvement of employees in decision making. The study findings can be applied in policy formulation and as basis for further studies in the field of business management and human resource.

Keywords: Teamwork practices, influence of teamwork practices, employee performance, public service, managing employee performance

Introduction

Employees are the most important resource in any given organization. In order for these resources to function at their maximum capacities and strength, the organization needs to embrace team work and motivate the employees to achieve the set goals. Teamwork refers to the actions of employees which are brought together to accomplish a common goal giving priority to the interest of the organization (Chukwudi, 2014). According to Kalisch and Lee (2009), teamwork involves a group of people who support one another to attain a particular objective. Their definition resonated well with Kyzlinkova, Dopkulilova and Kroupa (2007), who argued that teamwork is a process of organizing groups amongst the employees to achieve a certain work. Teamwork entails mutualism and collaborative engagements to achieve a particular aim (Khuong and Tien, 2013). Employees' empowerment and teamwork are some of the factors affecting job satisfaction (Jalal & Putri, 2015). It is very important to pay much attention to job satisfaction since it is a key variable in any organizational success. Job satisfaction avoids negative impact in the organizational performance (Bakotic & Babic, 2013). Particularly, it motivates employees to work effectively and stay competitive thereby able to sustain themselves.

Globally, employee performance is monitored using Performance Contracting (PC). The system of PC originated in France in 1960 as a component of Management Control Systems (MCS) aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in employee performance. Since then, performance contracting has been in use in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Finland among other nations. So far, performance contracting as a means of monitoring employee performance has been found to be very effective in France, Pakistan, India, South Korea and Malaysia where socio-economic growth has been on the increase. In Kenya, the system has not been effective as a result of compelling forces like politics, corruption and unconducive working environment in public service. Despite these challenges, Kenya has adopted various management systems such as Balanced Score Card (BSC) to encourage interactive benchmarking to test strategies, explore casual relations and communicate employee performance as indicated by Bogetoft, Bramsen and Nielsen (2006) in Armstrong and Baron (2009). Teamwork has been encouraged in every organization, more especially in public service so as to improve employee performance and create a good working environment. Adoption of teamwork enables an organization to create an environment that facilitates knowledge sharing among the employees.

The performance contracting team works closely with the ISO compliance team to make sure that ISO standards are adhered to and that quality is not compromised as each employee is expected to perform at best. In developed countries like the United Kingdom, trade unions are involved in employee performance contrary to what happens in Kenya where, unions are mainly concerned with collective bargaining, terms and conditions at the workplace without much concern about employee performance (Republic of Kenya, 2006; Ngesa, 2008; Armstrong and Baron, 2009, Armstrong, 2009; Republic of Kenya, 2016).

In Africa, the African Union (AU) came up with an African-Peer-Review mechanism known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to promote good governance through; democracy and good political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. Kenya adopted this mechanism in 2003 as a means of improving employee performance (Ojienda, 2007). The concept of embracing performance

contracting to enhance employee performance in Africa has been adopted systematically in; Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana and Kenya. Rwanda has streamlined government structures such as ministries and local authorities aimed at improving professionalism and employee performance in the country (Ministry of Local Government of Rwanda, 2010).

Franco (2008) and Aguinis (2009) found that managing employee performance is a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing of individuals as well as teams while aligning their performance with the strategic goals or objectives of the organization. In essence, it is managing employee performance in organizations based on objectives and targets set out in overall and individual performance contracts which provide the basis of measuring employee performance using performance appraisal systems. Performance appraisal comprises of targets or volume and quality of work, knowledge of job, dependability, staff development, innovation, communication, overall rating and conclusion. To attain an improved employee performance in public service in Kenya much efforts need to be put in place including rigorous research of barriers and challenges that face employee performance in Kenya. Thus there is a need to carry out the current study on examination of the role of team work practices on employees performance in public service in Kenya.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design for its appropriateness in reaching out to a large representative sample and generalization of the findings. A cross sectional survey research design was used to analyse how teamwork practices influence employees' performance in public service. This descriptive survey was considered appropriate because it narrated facts and characteristics concerning employee motivation, team work, performance counselling and enhanced performance in the public service. Kothari (2004) maintains that descriptive research studies are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. Descriptive survey design was also appropriate so that the researcher got information from those who have practical experience with the problem to be studied.

The target group comprised of 126,998 employees drawn from twenty ministries in Kenya. The study used a sample of 225 subjects which was calculated using Nassiuma (2000) finite sample size computation formula. Since the target population was heterogeneous, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed during sample selection. Data collection was by means of a questionnaire which had close ended items. Pilot testing of the instrument was done by administering the questionnaires to 10% of the total sample size.

To establish the validity of the research instrument the researcher sought opinions of experts. This facilitated the necessary revision and modification of the research instrument thereby enhancing validity. Further, the study assessed the responses and non-responses per question to determine if there was any technical dexterity with the questions asked. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha value where a score of 0.824 was attained thereby qualifying the research instrument as acceptable and reliable. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Quantitative responses based on Likert scale were coded in the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Processed data were then presented using simple frequencies and percentages, and summarized in Tables. The researcher also observed ethical and

legal issues in research like the principle of confidentiality, anonymity, and acknowledgement of other people's input throughout the whole study.

Results

Demographic characteristics

The study sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Data captured included the gender, job category, and educational qualification. The majority (60%) of the respondents were male while the remaining 40% were female. This implies that the respondents were well represented by gender. Level of education among the study respondents was examined. Nearly a third (32%) of the respondents had attained post graduate level of education, 25% of them had degree level, 21% had a diploma and the others, 22% were certificate level. This distribution shows that the study respondents were knowledgeable and in position to provide reliable responses on the study thematic area. The respondents had a wide range of experience with 74% having served for more than 7 years, 19% for up to 6 years while the rest did not respond to question.

Approaches used in Managing Employee Performance through Teamwork

The respondents were asked to indicate whether there are approaches used in the organization to enhance employee performance through teamwork. The category of opinions were either yes, no or not sure. The results indicated that majority (77 %) of the respondents said that the approaches are being applied in their respective organizations to enhance employee performance through teamwork. However, 20% of the respondents indicated that the approaches were not in use in their organizations. Meanwhile, only 3% respondents were not sure. The results imply that the approaches are applicable as component of team work within the public service in Kenya.

Effectiveness of Approaches used in Managing Employee Performance in the Civil Service

The study sought to find out the extent of effectiveness of the selected approaches in managing employee performance. The respondents were required to rate the items on a Likert scale: Highly effective (HE), Effective (E), Undecided (UD), ineffective (IE), and highly ineffective (HIE). The results were summarized in a Table 1.

Table 1

Effectiveness of Approaches used in Managing Employee Performance

Approaches	HE	E	UD	IE	HIE
Performance contracting	26%	45%	7%	14%	8%
Annual appraisal	21%	48%	7%	14%	10%
Midterm appraisal	8%	39%	21%	11%	21%
Peer appraisal	8%	33%	38%	17%	4%
Self-appraisal	16%	38%	13%	13%	20%
Continuous assessment	10%	55%	23%	10%	2%
Competence assessment	9%	47%	17%	12%	15%
Objective-setting and review	14%	51%	11%	9%	15%
Implementation of citizen delivery service charter	17%	47%	17%	3%	16%
Coaching and/or mentoring	9%	53%	12%	3%	23%
Application of Rapid Results Initiative	16%	39%	16%	9%	20%

Key: Highly Effective (HE); Effective (E); Undecided (UD); Ineffective (IE); Highly Ineffective (HIE)

From the study findings, over two thirds (71%) of the respondents indicated that performance contracting was an effective approach used in managing employee performance. Slightly more than two thirds (69%) of the study participants reported that employee performance could be managed through annual appraisal teamwork approach while nearly half (47%) of them were in opinion that midterm appraisal of teamwork could also effectively manage employee performance in the civil service.

On whether peer appraisal of teamwork could effectively enhance management of employee performance in the civil service, over a third (41%) of the respondents were in affirmative and another 21% of them were in contrary opinion. On the other hand slightly more than half (55%) of the study participants indicated that self-appraisal approach could ensure employee performance in teams in the civil service. Nearly two thirds (65%) of the respondents were in opinion that continuous assessment of teamwork would ensure management of employee performance in the civil service.

The study also investigated whether competence assessment of various teams of workers in public service could be effective in management of employee performance. Over a half (56%) of the respondents were in consensus while another 27% were in a contrary opinion. Nearly two thirds (65%) of them felt that objective setting and review among various teams in public service would effectively enhance their performance.

Further, the impact of implementation of citizen delivery service charter on teamwork management in the civil service was assessed. Nearly two thirds (64%) of the respondents pointed out that the approach effectively enhanced management of employee performance in the public sector. Coaching and/or mentoring of civil servants' teams also seemed to be an effective management approach of employee performance by 62% of the respondents being in supportive opinion and only 26% of them were in contrary opinion. Additionally, application of rapid results initiative in management of employee performance was also supported by over half (54%) of the study participants as an effective method to enhance teamwork in the public service.

Influence of Teamwork Practices on Employee Performance in the Civil Service

The study sought to establish whether there is an association between teamwork practices and employee performance in the public service in Kenya. The chi-square for independence was computed and results presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Chi-Square test for the association between teamwork practices and employee performance

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.444 ^a	11	.000
Likelihood Ratio	23.455	11	.023
Linear-by-Linear Association	.216	1	.818
N of Valid Cases	203		

a Zero (0) cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.01.

As shown in Table 2, the association between teamwork practices and employee performance in the public service in Kenya is statistically significant since the p-value is smaller than the level of significance (.05), $\chi^2 (11, N = 203) = 21.444, P = .001$. This implies that the employees' level of performance in public service commission is significantly influenced by teamwork practices.

Discussion

From the study findings, over two thirds (71%) of the respondents indicated that performance contracting is an effective approach in managing employee performance through teamwork. The study finding is in congruent with previously conducted studies that found, the performance contracting team ensures that all employees adhere to citizen service delivery charter to realize efficient, quality and timely delivery of services through improvements made in employee performance. The performance contracting team works closely with the ISO compliance team to make sure that ISO standards are adhered to and that quality is not compromised as each employee is expected to perform the best (Ngesa, 2008; Armstrong & Baron, 2009; Armstrong, 2009; Republic of Kenya, 2006; Republic of Kenya, 2016).

Slightly more than two thirds (69%) of the study participants reported that employee performance could be managed through annual appraisal teamwork approach while nearly half (47%) of them were in opinion that midterm appraisal of teamwork could also effectively manage employee performance in the civil service. In line with the study findings Grubb (2007) reported that performance appraisal is a procedure to evaluate how individual personnel are performing and how they can improve their performance and contribute to overall organizational performance. Performance appraisal establishes reward system that will combine the effort of leaders and the worker of organization to the common goals of their organizations (Cleveland, Murphy, & William, 1989). In the same vein, a study conducted by Nadeem Iqbal, Naveed Ahmad, Zeeshan Haider, Yumna Batool, Qurat-ul-ain (2013) found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between performance appraisal and employee performance ($p < .001, r = .590$).

Nearly two thirds (65%) of them felt that objective setting and review among various teams in public service would effectively enhance their performance. The study finding concurs with another study that was carried out by Boyt, Lusch and Mejza (2005) that found, team spirit in the organization is the key to achieve common goal of the team.

Over half (62%) of the study respondents supported that coaching and/or mentoring of civil servants' teams lead to improved employee performance. This finding is in agreement with previous studies that found, the manager is expected to respond and carefully question the employee for clarity purposes. Further, line managers should pay keen attention to issues affecting employees to be able to identify those who require professional counselling to facilitate the referral. Additionally, counseling of employees on weaknesses as well as reinforcing strength supports management by objectives (Republic of Kenya, 2008b; Kohli & Deb, 2011).

On the other hand, slightly more than half (54%) of the study participants felt that application of rapid results initiative in management of employee performance enhance teamwork in the public service. This finding is supported by various studies that found, a variety of approaches such as Rapid Results Initiative improve efficiency and determine how teamwork impacts on performance of employees in public service in Kenya (Armstrong & Baron, 2009; Kobia & Mohammed, 2009).

Conclusion

The study concludes that teamwork ensures effective operation within an organization. Through teamwork, members get the opportunity to enhance their skills, knowledge and abilities by working together with others. Moreover, teamwork ensures democracy at the workplace, enhance change, encourage innovation and creativity, and allow for effective decision-making and networking. There are emerging challenges in managing performance of employees in public service in Kenya including budgetary constraints; inadequate resources such as staff among others. Organizations therefore need to enhance capacity building of employees and appraisal; prompt promotion of employees, higher remuneration and good rewards to higher achievers to enhance commitment and improvement in work environment; effective communication and involvement of employees in decision making.

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