

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA

Winfred Nyaguthii

PhD Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT], Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between organizational processes and employees' performance in the county government. The survey method was used to help determine the relationship between capacity building on employees' performance in county governments in Kenya. Stratified sampling probability and simple random sampling techniques were utilized in drawing a representative sample from a population of 47 counties for the study. The response rate was in the percentage of questionnaires returned. Three hundred and eighty-one questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and three hundred and thirty-six were returned thus achieving a response rate of 88.19 %. Structured questionnaires were administered as the main data collection tool. The study also used secondary data from textbooks, journals, organizational manuals and the internet. Structural equation modelling and multivariate statistical tools were used to analyze the data. Regression was used to analyze the relationship of capacity building on the employees' performance. The hypotheses were analyzed using chi and Z-test. The results were presented in descriptive data such as tables, frequencies, charts and percentages. The finding was that organizational processes positively influence employee performance. The researcher advised the county government Hr specialist to strategize on how to improve work processes since they have a great influence on employees' performance.

Keywords: Capacity, Capacity Building, Performance, Process

INTRODUCTION

Organizational processes hold the organization together and turn strategy into action. A process is a sequence of activities that adds value by producing required outputs from a variety of inputs. Three main elements are placed in a linear arrangement: inputs, throughputs and outputs and understood in terms such as the application of knowledge and skills to transform the input factors into tangible outcomes – managerially desired behaviours and goal attainment. Locating the definition organizationally, Shields et al, (2015) explained that each of the systemic factors that may be subject to performance management interventions may be extended to include collective and organization-wide dimensions, where managers take active steps to align people with processes and form a technical system from which to deliver desired levels of service in cost-effective ways.

Because of the dynamics in the modern-day business environment, capacity building and manpower development are some of the key activities that any organization must engage in if it hopes to survive. So, all organizations use processes; ordering material, making products, selling services Svensson *et al.*, (2018). The inputs will generally be the outputs of other processes. During the transformation, value is added and resources consumed. The output can be an object, information, data or a decision. The customer may be either external or internal to the organization. Any representation of a process should therefore include the input, activities, output and the resources required (Garvin, 2013). In the broadest sense processes can be defined as collections of tasks and activities that together transform inputs into outputs. Processes provide a convenient, intermediate level of analysis of the organizational capacity need because they consist of diverse and interlinked tasks. A process perspective gives the needed integration, ensuring that the realities of work practice are linked explicitly to the firm's overall functioning. Scholars have developed three major approaches to organizational processes (Garvin, 2013). They are best considered separate but related schools of thought because each focuses on a particular process and explores its distinctive characteristics and challenges. The three categories are work processes, behavioural processes, and change processes (Barrett, 2014).

Porter (1985) and Mwiya (2009) assert that work processes can be conveniently grouped into two categories; processes that create, produce, deliver products and services that customers want. The first is operational processes and the second group administrative processes. New product development, manufacturing, logistics and distribution are examples of operational processes, while strategic planning, budgeting, and performance measurement are examples of administrative processes. Operational and administrative processes share several characteristics (Mwiya, 2009). Both involve sequences of linked, interdependent activities that together transform inputs into outputs. Both have beginnings and ends, with boundaries that can be defined with reasonable precision and minimal overlap (Barrett, 2014). And both have customers, who may be internal or external to the organization. Integration is often improved by the mere acknowledgement of work processes as viable units of analysis and targets of managerial action.

Behavioural processes are the sequences of steps used for accomplishing the cognitive and interpersonal aspects of work. The behavioural process approach has roots in organization theory and group dynamics focuses on ingrained behaviour patterns. These patterns reflect an organization's characteristic ways of acting and interacting; decision-making and communication processes are examples (Barrett, 2014). The underlying behaviour patterns are normally so deeply embedded and recurrent that they are displayed by most organizational members Svensson *et.al*, (2018). All behavioural processes share several characteristics. They are generalizations, distilled from observations of everyday work and have no independent existence apart from the work processes in which they appear. They are different from organizational culture because they reflect more than values and beliefs. There are three categories of behavioural processes, selected for their representativeness and rich supporting literature: decision-making, communication, and organizational learning processes. Svensson *et.al*, (2018). All involve the collection, movement, and interpretation of information, as well as forms of interpersonal interaction Decision-making processes, are lengthy, complex

and slow to change. They involve multiple, often overlapping stages, engage large numbers of people at diverse levels, suffer from predictable biases and perceptual filters and are shaped by the administrative, structural and strategic context. Their effectiveness can be judged, using criteria such as speed, flexibility, range of alternatives considered, logical consistency and results, and they are subject to managerial influence and control (Seth *et. al*, 2019). Communication is very important, managers can use the dimensions to profile their organizations and identify areas needing improvement. The nature, direction, and quality of discussion flows are important, as are the interrelationships among group members, their stances toward one another, and the tenor and tone of group work (Defra,2004). Organizational learning is essential to organizational health and survival, involves the creation and acquisition of new knowledge, and rests ultimately on the development of shared perspectives (Seth *et. al*, 2019). The way an organization approaches learning is as deeply embedded as its approaches to decision making and communication. Four broad processes are involved in organizational learning; knowledge acquisition, interpretation, dissemination, and retention. Organizational learning processes thus share many of the same characteristics as decision-making and communication processes this is an organizational process rather than an individual process (Defra, 2004).

The change process approach has roots in strategic management, organization theory, social psychology, and business history focus on sequences of events over time (Armstrong, 2009). These sequences, called processes, describe how individuals, groups and organizations adapt, develop and grow (Barrett, 2014). All change processes share several characteristics. They are longitudinal and dynamic, designed to capture the action as it unfolds, with three components always present as a set of starting conditions, a functional endpoint, and an emergent process of change. Most descriptions of change also divide time into broad stages or phases (Harris, et. al 2012). Each stage consists of groups of activities aimed at roughly similar goals, and the transition between stages may be smooth or turbulent (Seth *et al.* 2019). Studies of change have focused on four broad areas: creation, growth, transformation, and decline. Each period represents a critical stage in the individual or organizational life cycle, and, over time, the life cycle has become the organizing framework for the field (Hales, 2006).

Change processes can be classified on a few simple dimensions: they may be autonomous or induced and involve slow incremental evolution or alternating periods of stability and revolutionary change (Goswami, 2020). Complete process descriptions also include the precise sequence, duration, and timing of stages, as well as the nature and number of activities and participants at each stage. For the identified institutions and organizations, assessing institutional and organizational structures, functions, existing and needed capacities, relevant policies and coordination processes both vertical and horizontal including administrative structure (Hales, 2006) service provision processes organizational and institutional capacity of implementing agencies and inter-organizational relations community characteristics and their capacity (Goswami, 2020). This means fine-tuning tools and sharpening skills to ensure institutional and organizational structural development is informed by a comprehensive analysis of the functions, capacity needs and mechanisms for coordination and managing relationships of organizations Eldmond et. al, (2001). This is critical for promoting stronger vertical and horizontal institutional and organizational linkages to improve governance effectiveness (Hales, 2006).

Problem statement

County Governments in Kenya have been experiencing various problems in the dispensation of their duties and service delivery, and some of the problems if not efficiently managed has to lead to paramount inefficient and poor service delivery, turnover and massive losses. Capacity development is considered an endogenous dynamic process that relies on one's motivation, effort, and perseverance to learn and progress which enables organizations to change, flourish and grow (Ahuja 2006). The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) explains its perspective on capacity based on five core capabilities namely "capability to act and self-organize, capability to generate development results, capability to relate, capability to adapt and self-renew, and the capability to achieve coherence" (Fowler, 2010). Capacity development is very much

related to the ways organizations operate (Fowler, 2010). Culture bears an understanding of the way an organization operates, its procedures, beliefs and values; it is usually affected by the people employed in it, the past incidents, present influences and the type of work it undergoes (Singh, 2015).

Since August 2010 Kenya has had a new national constitution and the structure of the local governments was changed. There are 47 County Governments that have been mandated to operationalize devolution from 2013 on devolution implementation as per the Kenya Constitution of 2010, and studies are ongoing regarding how the county governments carry out their mandate to improve performance (Werner, 2011).

The County Governments reform programs began with financial reforms aimed at enhancing inter-governmental fiscal transfers, improving financial management, debt resolution, streamlining the budgeting system and service provision capacity building. According to Lundu *et, al.*, (2015) the Kenya Local Government Reform Program (KLGRP) was set to facilitate key reforms in transitioning from the defunct Local Authorities to County Governments.

The technological advancement through IFMIS systems has generated a lot of challenges in the counties. Rampant corruption has been detected through the use of these systems, where county officials, have tried to give tenders to various contractors, through dubious and unprofessional ways. The processes are not well defined nor do the employees have the capacity to handle them.

Mugambi (2013) carried out a study assessment in Kenya and demonstrated that many of the county governments' operational staff were unaware of both national control's assurance standards requirements and their respective responsibilities. Poor coordination of processes is another problem in the counties. Although each of the services had its capable processes for determining service requirements and planning most of the departments are still based on informal mechanisms, including face to face communication and meetings, and the different service groups lacked clear and enforceable performance standards leading to long-standing disagreements between the service delivery teams which led to reducing the quality of service.

According to Abuga (2002), there have been inappropriate staffing practices; a decline in efficiency and effectiveness in the service delivery; staff imbalance and under-utilization are some of the characteristics of the county governments' employees in Kenya. It is for this reason the researcher has embarked on the study of the organizational processes and their relationship with employee's performance in Kenya's county governments.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to determine the relationship between organizational processes and employee's performance in County governments in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- To investigate the relationship between efficient organizational process and performance
- To make a recommendation for policy formulation effective organizational processes to improve employee's performance.

The research tested the following hypotheses:

- H_{a1} : Organizational processes have no significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya.
- H_{01} : Organizational processes have a significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

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processes; ordering material, making products, selling services (Bradach 2014). The inputs will generally be the outputs of other processes. During the transformation, value is added and resources consumed. The output can be an object, information, data or a decision. The customer may be either external or internal to the organization. Any representation of a process should therefore include the resources required, input, activities and output (Garvin, 2013). In the broadest sense processes can be defined as collections of tasks and activities that together transform inputs into outputs (Bradach 2014). Processes provide a convenient, intermediate level of analysis of the organizational capacity need because they consist of diverse and interlinked tasks.

A process perspective gives the needed integration, ensuring that the realities of work practice are linked explicitly to the firm's overall functioning. Scholars have developed three major approaches to organizational processes (Garvin, 2013). They are best considered separate but related schools of thought because each focus on a particular process and explores its distinctive characteristics and challenges. The three categories are work processes, behavioural processes, and change processes (Barrett, 2014).

Work processes

Porter (1985) and Mwiya (2009) assert that work processes can be conveniently grouped into two categories; processes that create, produce, deliver products and services that customers want. The first is operational processes and the second group administrative processes. New product development, manufacturing, logistics and distribution are examples of operational processes, while strategic planning, budgeting, and performance measurement are examples of administrative processes. Operational and administrative processes share several characteristics (Mwiya, 2009). Both involve sequences of linked, interdependent activities that together transform inputs into outputs. Both have beginnings and ends, with boundaries that can be defined with reasonable precision and minimal overlap (Barrett, 2014). And both have customers, who may be internal or external to the organization. Integration is often improved by the mere acknowledgement of work processes as viable units of analysis and targets of managerial action.

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There are three categories of behavioural processes, selected for their representativeness and rich supporting literature: decision-making, communication, and organizational learning processes. All involve the collection, movement, and interpretation of information, as well as forms of interpersonal interaction (Bradach, 2014). Decision-making processes are lengthy, complex and slow to change. They involve multiple, often overlapping stages, engage large numbers of people at diverse levels, suffer from predictable biases and perceptual filters and are shaped by the administrative, structural and strategic context. Their effectiveness can be judged, using criteria such as speed, flexibility, range of alternatives considered, logical consistency and results, and they are subject to managerial influence and control (Seth *et. al*, 2019). Communication is very important, managers can use the dimensions to profile their organizations and identify areas needing improvement. The nature, direction, and quality of discussion flows are important, as are the interrelationships among group members, their stances toward one another, and the tenor and tone of group work (Graffin & Moorhead, 2011).

Organizational learning is essential to organizational health and survival, involves the creation and acquisition of new knowledge, and rests ultimately on the development of shared perspectives (Seth *et. al*, 2019). The way an organization approaches learning is as deeply embedded as its approaches to decision making and communication. Four broad processes are involved in organizational learning; knowledge acquisition, interpretation, dissemination, and retention. Organizational learning processes thus share many of the same characteristics as decision-making and communication processes this is an organizational process rather than an individual process (Graffin & Moorhead, 2011)

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Complete process descriptions also include the precise sequence, duration, and timing of stages, as well as the nature and number of activities and participants at each stage. For the identified institutions and organizations, assessing institutional and organizational structures, functions, existing and needed capacities, relevant policies and coordination processes both vertical and horizontal including administrative structure(s) service provision processes organizational and institutional capacity of implementing agencies and inter-organizational relations community characteristics and their capacity (Kupers, 2010). This means fine-tuning tools and sharpening skills to ensure institutional and organizational structural development is informed by a comprehensive analysis of the functions, capacity needs and mechanisms for coordination and managing relationships of organizations (Dale, 2002). This is critical for promoting stronger vertical and horizontal institutional and organizational linkages to improve governance effectiveness (Hales, 2006).

Nonaka & Takeuchi (2007) developed a four-stage spiral model of organizational learning. They started by differentiating concepts of "tacit knowledge" from "explicit knowledge" and described a process of alternating between the two. Tacit knowledge is personal, context-specific subjective knowledge, whereas explicit knowledge is codified, systematic, formal, and easy to communicate. The tacit knowledge of key personnel within the organization can be made explicit, codified in manuals, and incorporated into new products and processes. According to this model, knowledge creation and organizational learning take a path of socialization, externalization, internalization and combinations in an infinite spiral (Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009)

Bontis *et. al* (2009) empirically tested a model of organizational learning that encompassed both stocks and flows of knowledge across three levels of analysis: individual, team and organization. Organizational learning has proven to be somewhat an elusive concept to grasp and therefore its practical implementation has also been difficult. Based on such, a conceptualization of organizational learning and a new framework to guide management practice is proposed.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: The research design employed in this study was both quantitative and qualitative. A survey was done involving the use of empirical assessments that involve numerical measurements and analysis, for example, the use of questionnaires to collect information and qualitative aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of a situation. The study targeted all the employees in the 47 county governments Kenya. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample eight counties were selected followed by simple random sampling.

Data for the study was collected by administering a 20-item questionnaire to a sample of 386 respondents. Eight items were measuring the relationship between organizational processes on employees' performance while 12 items were measuring organizational performance. A total of 336 questionnaires were returned and analysis was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

Target Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure: A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Stratified sampling, groups a population into homogeneous subjects that share similar characteristics to ensure equitable representation of the population in the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda 2009). The population of the county government was too large because it was over 10,000. From the eight strata representing the distinct regions, 10% of the counties was selected from a total population of 42816 using a simple random technique. The population of 1,373 was drawn which was still a large sample. To arrive at the sample size, the following formula was used

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where;

n = the desired sample size

Z² = the Z score corresponding to 95% CI, the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level.

p = is the estimated proportion of an attribute, the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured q = 1-p, assuming a 95% confidence level hence the value of Z is 1.96, d = the level of statistical significance

The sample was therefore,

$$\frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.5 \times 0.5)}{(.05)^2} = 384$$

Since the target population was more than 10,000 the sample size was reduced using the sample estimate formula as below:

$$nf = \frac{n}{(1 + n)/N}$$

Where; nf = the desired sample size (if n is greater than 10,000),

N = the estimate of population size

The sample population was 42,615 employees of the eight-county government employees to be sampled

The sample size was therefore:

$$nf = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384}{42615}} = 381$$

Data Collection Method: Data for the study was collected by administering a questionnaire to a sample of 386 employees of the county governments in Kenya. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher or the research assistants. The respondents who felt they can complete their questionnaires during their free time and at their pace were allowed to do so later the researcher collected them. To encourage open responses the questionnaires were anonymous the respondents were not supposed to indicate their names bearing in mind the county governments are been politicized so it was prudent to protect the respondents. The completed questionnaires were then collected for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The eight factors measuring the independent variable organizational processes on employee's performance were subjected to a reliability test. Reliability is the extent to which a research tool is consistent and stable, hence predictable and accurate if a repeat measurement is made by the tool under the same conditions, it will give the same results (Kumar 2018, Saunders *et al.*, 2012) Coefficient alpha popularly known as Cronbach's alpha measure is the most widely used test for reliability analysis. According to Kothari (2004) and Saunders, *et al.* (2012) a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.7 is usually acceptable. Where Cronbach's value of $\alpha = 0.792$ for organizational processes was obtained. The 12 factors measuring the dependent variable organizational performance were subjected to a reliability and consistency test. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the overall organizational performance was found to have reliable and consistent variables

In the descriptive analysis majority of the respondents agreed that the work schedule in their units has provision for frequent job capacity building sessions and employees clearly understand the day-to-day work-related processes in their work station. The results show that most of the employees were aware of what they are expected to do as their daily duties to improve the performance of the county governments.

On conflict management, the majority of the respondents were in agreement that their department regularly sensitizes employees on conflict management at the workplace. However, quite a number disagreed with the statement as shown by 38.3%. The majority of the participants were in agreement that there is frequent communication in their department for task follow up. This implies that the leaders in most county governments are proactive in ensuring tasks are executed on time. However, the results indicated that the organizational structure of the county government does not effectively support the flow of information. Besides, the results indicated that there are poor incentives in county governments. The study after explaining the descriptive statistics went on to aggregate the mean scores and standard deviation for the independent and dependent variables. Work processes had a mean score of 3.42 ± 0.75419 showing considerable variation in the responses to the Likert scale items.

The results of the model summary established that the organizational process explains 42.7% of employee performance in county governments in Kenya as shown by Adjusted R squared value. The findings of the analysis of variance revealed that the model was statistically significant at ($F = 206.014$; $P < 0.001$) implying a good model fit when all the organizational process factors are included. This means that the model used in the study was appropriate in predicting well organizational processes influence employee performance. Besides, the findings of the regression analysis revealed that organizational processes positively and significantly influence employee performance at Kenya's county governments at ($\beta = 1.208$; $P\text{-value} < 0.001$). This indicates that a unit improvement in organizational resources would lead to a 1.208 increase in employee performance. The organizational processes significant influence on employee performance in county governments hypothesis was accepted.

A diagnostic test was performed before the hypothesis testing could be undertaken using Normal Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plot for the study variables. The Q-Q plot did not show any significant outliers in the data for work processes is normally distributed therefore the data is fit to be used for regression analysis.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that organizational processes positively and significantly influence employee performance in Kenya's county governments. This finding is supported by the coefficient of determination which shows that organizational processes in the counties explained the maximum variation in performance of the counties. The study noted that the work schedule that provides for frequent job capacity building sessions in their department is a critical element. The study noted that clarity of the day-to-day work-related processes in their work station, regular sensitization on conflict management at the workplace and frequent communications in the department for tasks follow up to enhance performance improvement of employees of the county governments.

However, the study results indicated that the organizational structure of the county government does not effectively support the flow of information and that there are poor incentives in county governments. This is fueled by strategies and ethical issues as noted in other studies.

The county governments should improve on organizational information flow to enhance more employees' participation in their work especially on decisions and structuring their work processes. Incentives are another area that needs to be addressed by the human resources experts concerned.

Strategies of all county governments about performance must be given priority because a strategic plan of any organization is a pillar to good performance. For the organization to grow and expand its business operations, it is very crucial to understand and follow the Importance of Strategic Planning In the 20th-century ethical issues are the major challenge and a serious drawback in the public sectors therefore all the county governments must sensitize employees on the importance of practising integrity and diligence at the workplace. All found culpable be persecuted with no fear or favours.

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