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Employees' Motivation and Local Governments Performance in Tanzania: A Case Mvomero District Council

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Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

02 May 2024 Employee motivation is a universal concept that is accepted by human resource practitioners as a tool to improve organizational performance. This study sought to examine the effects of employee motivation in improving performance in local governments in Tanzania. The study aims at examining the contribution of employee motivation to local governments in Tanzania. This paper adopted a research case design whereby Mvomero District Council was the case study. A sample size of 78 respondents was taken for the study. The study adopted a mixed approach whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches in the data collection process. The data was collected through key informant interviews and questionnaires. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were negative about the employee motivation provided in Mvomero District Council, especially at ward and village levels. The findings also, found that there is a positive relationship between employees' motivation and employees' performance. The higher the employee's motivation the higher the employee's performance. The study indicated that employees are motivated by financial motivation rather than non-financial motivation. The study concluded that there is a greater relationship between employee performance and employee motivation and employees in rural settings are less motivated compared to their counterparts in an urban setting. The study recommended that the government incentives policies should be reversed not only to motivate top management levels and consider middle and lower levels employees. The study also, recommended for the Mvomero District Council to improve the working conditions of the employees who are working in remote areas.

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Local Governments, Performance

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INTRODUCTION

Globally employee motivation becomes a critical aspect of modern human resource management practices. According to Sishuwa and Phiri (2020), motivation schemes are concerned with the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies to reward people fairly, equitably, and consistently for their value to the organization. Incentives deal with the strategies, policies, and processes required to ensure that the contribution of people to the organization is recognized by both financial and non-financial means. In most cases, organization especially in the private sector focuses much on the financial aspect of reward management and ignore the non-financial aspect which largely affects employee motivation in an organization (Njunwa, 2019). The incentive is a two-way process that effectively benefits both the organization and the people who are working with the organization; therefore, it is important to ensure good reward management strategies for organizational success.

The performance of the organization depends on the effective use of human resources in a given organization either public or private. However, it is suggested that the performance of the employees is highly affected by employee motivation at the workplace. The motivation includes financial and non-financial. Human resources are the most essential determinant of the organization's performance, and the organization has the responsibility of ensuring that human resources are well-motivated and equipped to perform their duties (Sunia, 2014). Forson *et al* (2022) argued that the performance of individual employees is collectively reflected in the general performance of the organization which there are relations between encouraging an environment of employees and organizational performance. Therefore, it is true that employee performance is

highly determined by the way an organization provides incentives.

The study conducted by San (2012) on Small and Medium Enterprises suggested that rewarding employees has a positive impact on financial and non-financial performance including better organisational reputation. This creates an opportunity for an organization to develop employees with both financial and non-financial rewards for improving performance. Motivation as stated by Aworemi *et al* (2021) is generally defined as the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal. It was also described by Elliot and Zahn (2008) as the strength and course of behaviour, these three concepts can be referred to as how hard the individual efforts are and for how long are they maintained. In certain instances, motivation can serve as the explanation and the prediction of the behaviour of a particular individual's work performance. Motivation refers to “the reasons underlying behaviour” (Guay, 2018). Motivation has been brought into one of the leading organization's strategies which can grow the performance of employees and surge the production of organizations.

Motivation for employees is a very important aspect of performance because it helps employees to accept changes as may be offered by the Organization from time to time, increases the rate of effectiveness and efficiency, raises organizational commitment provides the grounds for proper utilization of the resources and Increase organization ability to face uncertain business challenges. The long-term development and performance of any business depend much on how much the employees are motivated. Researches show that there is a relationship between motivation and performance (Njunwa, 2017). Although many theories have been

developed and plenty of research has been conducted, factors that motivate people to perform well at work are still controversial topics.

Employee motivation in human resource management has been a challenge in modern organizations (Njunwa 2017; Armstrong, 2009). Both public and private sectors establish various incentive policies and schemes for employee motivation. Poor motivation has a negative contribution to employee performance and increases labour turnover in the organization. Motivation provides a platform through which organization can motivate their employees and improve their performance for organizational productivity. The study conducted by Nchimbi and Korojelo (2021) revealed that there is a great relationship between employees' motivation and employee performance as well as organizational performance at large in public services in Tanzania

The government of Tanzania, initiated for various motivation/incentives programs to motivate employees in the public sector (Kesale, 2020). The government spends a huge amount of money spending for employee motivation including financial and non-financial motivation. Regularly, the government reviews public services remuneration and effective promotion for employees who are working in local governments. Government in the early 2020s introduced the Local Government Reform Program (LGRP) and one of the components was to improve the welfare of employees who work in local government authorities (LGAs). However, despite all the efforts done by the government improving employee motivation still becomes a big challenge in improving the performance of local governments. Citizens in local governments complain about the poor performance of employees in the implementation of public development projects (Mafuru et al, 2015). The employees engaged themselves in corrupt practices and mismanagement of public funds directed toward improving social service delivery. Mvomero District is one of the local governments experiencing poor employee performance, poor implementation of development projects, and high

labour turnover in Tanzania. Recently, the District Executive Director (DED) and Head of Departments (Accounts and Procurements) were suspended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tanzania Hon. Kassim Majaliwa for misuse of Covid 19 funds. Therefore, the study aimed to examine the challenge that affects the effective implementation of incentive strategies on employee motivation in local government in Tanzania and recommend appropriate strategies to improve the situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives

The study was guided by Herzberg's Two Factors Theory. The theory developed by Psychologist Fredrick Herzberg famous known as motivation-hygiene theory. The two two-factor theory by Herzberg is a theory about people's job satisfaction that depends on two kinds of factor. Factors for satisfaction (motivators/satisfiers) and factors for dissatisfaction (hygiene factors /dissatisfies). Performance, recognition, job status, responsibilities, and growth opportunities, all fall under motivators /satisfiers while salary, primary working conditions, the relationship with colleagues, the physical workplace, and the relationship between supervisor and employee fall under hygiene factors / dissatisfaction. The theory concluded that there are factors that make people feel good about their jobs and other factors that make people feel bad about their jobs (Dugguh, 2014). According to Herzberg, the factors that lead to job satisfaction are separate and distinct from those that lead to job dissatisfaction at the workplace.

Herzberg's theory is very relevant to this research topic and constitutes a good framework for the effects of motivation on employee performance in local governments in Tanzania: a case of Mvomero District Council. The theory shows the applicability of employee motivation including recognition, of responsibilities, and feeling of achievement. These have the power to motivate employees to higher levels of performance if satisfactorily realized. Also, factors like working

conditions and monetary incentives just prevent job dissatisfaction but do not necessarily motivate people.

Empirical Literature Review

Njunwa (2017) in his study on “Employee Motivation in Rural Local Governments in Tanzania: Empirical Evidence from Morogoro District Council” found that employees’ motivation in local government authorities in Tanzania is highly influenced by financial motivation rather than non-financial motivation. Low-level employees such as Village Executive Officers (VEOs) and Ward Executive Officers (CEOs) their performance is highly affected by the low level of motivation provided to them. The study gap focuses much on the financial motivation in rural local governments and fails to link with performance. This indicated that the government of Tanzania requires to improve motivational levels for the employees who are working in rural local government authorities (LGAs).

Bawa (2019) contends that people are motivated to seek social equity in the rewards they receive for performance. People will be motivated when they see that they are treated fairly and equally. Equity is an individual's belief that the treatment he or she receives is fair relative to the treatment received by others. According to equity theory, outcomes from a job include pay, recognition, promotions, social relationships, and intrinsic rewards. To get these rewards, the individual gives inputs to the job, such as time, experience, effort, education, and loyalty. The theory suggests that people view their outcomes and inputs as a ratio and then compare it to the ratio of someone else. People who feel under-rewarded try to reduce the inequity. Such individuals might decrease their inputs by exerting fewer efforts, increasing their outcomes by asking for raises, distorting the original ratios by rationalizing, and trying to get the other person to change her or his outcomes.

Robert et al (2008) suggested that when all the basic needs of the employees are satisfied such as

food, shelter, and others employees will be happy and feel that they are part of the organization and they will work as if the organization belongs to them, they will do the best they can to enhance the existence of the organization but when these needs are not met and their basic interests are not fulfilled, they will feel unconsidered and hence it will affect their performance and contribution level, improves the relationship between management and employees - when employees are motivated, they will have a good relationship with the management which relationship will lead to improved performance of the workforce.

Cascio (2010), suggested that the higher the relationship between the employees and the employers, the higher the contribution of the employees toward the organization. So, the relationship is one of the most important things that lead to organizational survival. Motivation leads to the commitment of employees to their work - when the employees are motivated, they will be highly committed to their work and too much commitment will lead to greater output. Employees will leave everything else, and they will be focused on their work so that they produce a better result. Therefore, commitment employees to improve their performance towards attaining organizational objectives.

Ojokuku and Oyedokun (2011) suggested that employees should be given the kind of rewards they want or the motivation they want, if they want or prefer monetary motivation much more non-monetary, they should be given. When they are given the kind of motivation they want, they feel that they are considered hence work hard and perform better than they used to do. Some employees will get satisfied when they are financially motivated or rewarded because they will use that finances to pay their children's school fees and fulfil other needs which makes employees more vulnerable. In many cases, financial motivation compensates for lower-ability employees by making them more eager to learn. According to him, he said that few employees prefer non-monetary motivation such as promotion, and recognition, and most especially those are the kind of employees who

have no family, for them they just want to get a good name and recognition.

Most researchers say that there is an obvious connection between motivation and employee performance, and they can deliver more if workers are motivated. Better results will also lead to success which will lead to greater encouragement. They can do the job needed honestly, as though workers are empowered and happy. Often, motivated workers do more work than others with their high abilities as they are happy and have high results (Bradley, 2004). "If employees are motivated and happy, they will do the work to the best of their ability instead of just doing it because they have to". (Ryan, & Deci, 2017). Unmotivated workers, on the other hand, lose their enthusiasm for work which leads to quitting the job. Leaving seasoned staff hardly affects the job too much.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Mvomero District Council which is located in Morogoro Region. The rationale behind the researcher's selection of the given study area is based on the regular complaints from employees about low motivation levels and poor performance in the implementation of development projects (Mwananchi, 2023). The study adopted a case study research design to get in-depth information about employees' motivation in local governments. The study employed a mixed method approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. The rationale for using a mixed approach is based on the fact that it integrates the benefits of both methods and the results become more credible and more valid (Kothari, 2014).

The target population of the study was 98 employees from three selected wards namely Mzumbe, Mlali and Mlela wards. The sample size of the study was 78 respondents obtained through Yamane's (1967) formula (Maxwell and Loomis 2014). The sampling technique used was random sampling from the list of employees in Mvomero District Council. The research used purposive sampling in selecting key informants (KIs). The

study collected both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaires and key informant interviews (KIs). The documentary review was used to collect secondary data including council reports and documents. The Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis where data from key informants were interpreted and organized into different themes based on the conceptual description of ideas and concepts. The quantitative data was analysed through Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Social Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 indicates the demographic data of the respondents based on their gender and the study area. The data indicated that the majority of the respondents at Mvomero District Council were males which is equivalent to 58.9 percent compared to 41.1 percent of the female employees. This implies that the district council has a large number of male employees than female and a major reason for this difference is based on the fact that the council is located in a district rural area.

The level of education of the respondents is important in the collection of the data from the respondents. *Table 1*. Indicated that the majority of the respondents possessed secondary education (35.9%) and diploma level (34.6%) followed by Degree level (23.1%) and very few with primary education. The researcher realized that currently, the government recruits its staff only from the secondary education level. The level of education implies that the majority of employees who are working at the Ward and Village level do not have a degree education. As indicated in *Table 1*. The working experience of the respondents is important as it shows the ability of the respondents to provide live experience on the way employees' motivation affects their performance in local governments. Therefore, the study thought that the study needed to collect information related to the working experience of

the respondents. On *Table 1*, the study pointed out that the majority of the respondents about 44.9% are employees who have working experiences between 1 to 5 years which involves young age employees. The data indicated that 35.9% of the respondents had working experience of 6 to 10

years and only 19.2% of the respondents had working experience of 11 years and above. This implies that the majority of the employees have adequate experience and knowledge in working with local governments and are capable of answering the questionnaire distributed to them.

Table 1: Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents interviewed (n=78)

| Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percent (%) |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sex | Male | 46 | 58.9 |
| | Female | 32 | 41.0 |
| Education level | Primary | 5 | 6.4 |
| | Secondary | 28 | 35.9 |
| | Diploma | 27 | 34.6 |
| | Degree | 18 | 23.1 |
| Marital status | Single | 29 | 37.2 |
| | Married | 49 | 62.8 |
| Working Experiences | 1 – 5 | 35 | 44.9 |
| | 6 – 10 | 28 | 35.9 |
| | 11 and above | 15 | 19.2 |
| | Total | 78 | 100 |

Source: Field Data

Employee's Perception Toward Motivation Provided in Mvomero District Council

The study aimed to investigate the perception of employees on the motivation provided in Morogoro District Council, Morogoro. Luthans (2011) argued that the motivation concept is not universal, and each employee perceives different levels of motivation. *Table 2* indicated that the majority of the respondents equal to 52.6% were

negative about the employee motivation provided to employees at ward and village levels. At the same time, about 33.3% of the respondents were moderate on the motivation provided to them. The finding shows that only 14.1% were positive about the employee's motivation provided by the council. The finding implies that the level of employee motivation is essential and that organizations must ensure that employee's perception is positive.

Table 2: Employees Perceptions Towards Motivation Provided in MDC

| Level | Category | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Negative | <14.7 | 41 | 52.6 |
| Moderate | 14.7-21.1 | 26 | 33.3 |
| Positive | >21.1 | 11 | 14.1 |

The above findings were supported by a key informant interview from one of the Village Executive Officers (VEO) who stated that:

"The employees at ward and village levels are forgotten when it comes to the motivation issues whether financial or non-financial motivation, sometimes employees are transferred to Ward or village levels as punishment" (KI 5 at Melela Ward, 2023)

The above findings imply that employees who are working at the ward and village level in local governments are not satisfied with the motivation provided to them to motivate them to work in rural areas. One of the respondents complained that:

"We are working in a very difficult working environment, there are no offices, chairs, and other infrastructures, no accommodation for staff, and no transport allowance for an

employee who is living far away from the workstation” (KI 3 at Mangae Village, 2023).

This study is in line with the study conducted by Njunwa (2017) in his study on “Employees Motivation in Rural Local Governments in Tanzania”. In his study which was qualitatively conducted realized that employees who are working in rural areas are at a disadvantage in motivation in comparison with the employees who are working in urban areas i.e. Cities and Municipalities. Another study conducted by Maimuna and Rashad (2014) in their study on “the impact of employee training and development on employee Productivity” is in line with the findings of the study. Their study indicated that employees perceive positively that employee motivation provided an incentive to encourage the productivity of the organization’s functions. The study indicated that employees are motivated by both financial and non-financial incentives and shows the connection between the two. Therefore, this implies that it is important to consider employee’s perception of the motivation provided by the organization.

Effects of Motivation on Employee’s Performance

The study aimed to examine the relationships between employee motivation and employee performance in local governments. *Table 3* indicated that the majority of the respondents, 64.1 % were in favour of financial rewards in improving the morale of the employees and increasing their performance. The financial rewards include monthly salaries, bonuses, and various allowances given to employees. This implies that the local government should invest more in financial motivation than non-financial motivation for its employees. This study finding was supported by a Key Informant who stated that;

“Financial reward is more important to us, especially employees who are coming from poor families with extended families. It is not relevant to me to give me an appreciation

letter while my children have no school fees” (Key Informants 3, Lengayi, 2023).

The above finding is in line with the study conducted by Mohamed (2009) on “The impacts of motivation on employee’s performance”. In his study realized that the majority of the respondents indicated that financial reward “Pays” a major source of motivator factor that increases employee performance at the workplace. In his study, about 41.6% of the respondents mentioned paying as the motivator that influences employee performance in the workplace. The study suggests that salary increment is essential to increase job morale and commitment as recommended that the higher the pay the higher the employees’ motivation and performance.

Another study conducted in a developed nation by Bojana and Trklija (2014) on “Employees Motivation and Reward System in Local Government in Serbia. Her study indicates that both employees in development are motivated by financial incentives like developing countries. In her study, the findings show that 58% of the respondent were highly motivated by their salary levels. She recommends that motivation that appears in material form motivates more employees than motivation or rewards that appear in non-material form.

The study findings indicated that job design and job enrichment are the second effect that influences employee performance. About 61.5% of the respondents were in favour of job design and job enlargement as essential in improving employee morale and performance. The respondents indicated that employees are always in favour of performing tasks that are relevant to his/her profession and qualification. This finding was supported by one of the Village Executive Officers (VEO) who stated that;

“I was employed as a Village Executive Officer with a Diploma Qualification in 2014, I went for my bachelor’s degree and completed it successfully in 2018. Despite my bachelor’s qualification still, the council refused to recategorize me as Human

Resource Officer II. Therefore, I am very disappointed with the same work I did before I acquired my bachelor's degree in human

resource management” (Key Informants 6, Village Executive Officer, 2022)

Table 3: The effects of employee motivation on their performance (n=78)

| Description | Yes | | No | |
|--|-----|------|----|------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| The improvement of the quality of work is the result of financial rewards at the workplace. | 50 | 64.1 | 28 | 35.9 |
| Increase employee morale work and productivity as the result of a good working environment | 42 | 53.8 | 36 | 46.2 |
| Employees' recognition and appreciation by management improve the performance of the workers | 44 | 56.4 | 34 | 43.6 |
| The management of the council involves employees in decision-making processes. | 26 | 33.3 | 52 | 66.7 |
| Effective leadership styles motivate employees toward effective performance | 40 | 51.3 | 38 | 48.7 |
| Whether poor member support from management reduces the morale of the employees at work | 44 | 56.4 | 34 | 43.6 |
| Job design and job enrichment increase the performance of employees at work | 48 | 61.5 | 30 | 38.5 |

The study finding is in line with the study conducted by Mani (2021) on the effects of job satisfaction on turnover intention in Tanzania Private Organizations: The Case of Bagamoyo Sugar Limited. His study through the cross-tabulation indicated that 60% of the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed on the fact that non-financial motivation is useful in increasing employees and reducing labour turnover. His study concluded that organization has to make sure to encourage employees' support, respect, and recognition as the strategy to improve their morale at work.

A similar study conducted by Shishuwa and Phiri (2020) on the Logistic Industry in Zambia revealed that non-monetary rewards were recommended by the majority of the respondents about 65% arguing that non-monetary rewards are useful in retaining employees in the organization. This study also indicated that support from the management (56.4%) and management recognition and appreciation (56.4%) as essential in increasing employee morale and commitment to attaining organizational objectives.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the study concluded that there is a close relationship between employee motivation and employee performance. The employees require both financial and non-financial motivation to improve their commitment and morale at work. Both top and lower-level employees are required to be motivated. The study findings concluded that the majority of the employees at lower levels and rural areas have negative perceptions of the motivation given to them compared to an employee who is working in urban areas. The study recommends that the government through PO – MLGRA should increase the salaries and establish financial incentives for middle and lower-level employees. The incentive policies should be established to cover all employees' cadres in local governments. Local governments should establish good working environments for employees who are working in rural areas as a way to motivate them. The working environment includes the construction of offices, health centres, and schools. These infrastructures will attract employees to work in remote areas and reduce labour turnover. Furthermore, the local

governments should ensure that top management officials provide support to employees to improve their morale to perform tasks. There is a need for appreciation and recognition of the efforts that employees are making in improving public service delivery. Top management should have regular visits and involve employees in the decision-making process.

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