

**THE EFFECTS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM ON CIVIL SERVANTS
JOB PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATION IN KENYA:
A CASE STUDY OF MINISTRY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

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ABSTRACT.

Performance Appraisal System (PAS) which can be defined as the process of determining and communicating to an employee how he or she is performing on the job. In Kenya, PAS within the Civil Service was introduced around 2006 and has over the years become a popular staff management system driven via the popular government performance contracting initiative. The system is being embraced in the Kenyan public service for tracking employees' performance in service delivery. PAS has signaled possibility for improved performance in civil service productivity and employee motivation. Despite the impressive performance and staff motivation signals elicited by PAS in civil service, no detailed description of the situation has been done. This study then sought to assess the effect of PAS in job performance and employee motivation in the Ministry of State for Public Service. The study adopted stratified random sampling. Staff were randomly sampled from also randomly selected departments who were interviewed using pre-tested questionnaires and through focused group discussions. Data was analyzed using appropriate statistical applications in SPSS. The researcher concluded that employees at the MSPS are usually involved in the setting of performance targets. They are also substantially appraised against the targets set at the beginning of the appraisal period. The study revealed that employees were given feedback to enable them improve their performance. This shows that PA has a positive impact on the employee's performance which leads to motivation. The Ministry was for example number seven in the recent performance rankings released by the President and Prime minister. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations among others are made for consideration by the MSPS so as to enhance the employee's work performance. PA is a good management tool but is should be subjected to continuous reviews in line with the changing trends. This is because HRM is dynamic and for PA to be Relevant, it has to keep up the pace. All stakeholders should be consulted during the PA process. This should include use of 360- degree feedback.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Performance Appraisal (PA) has been defined as "the process of determining and communicating to an employee how he or she is performing on the job and ideally establishing a plan of improvement" Byars and Rue (2000). Dessler (2005) defines performance appraisal as "evaluating an employee's current and past performance relative to his/her performance standards". Therefore, if PA is successfully carried out in an organization, the employees would be able to know how well they are performing and what is expected of them in future in terms of effort and task direction through an established plan for performance improvement. *The Draft Performance Appraisal System Policy for the Public Service in Kenya (2008)* views PA as the

process of assessing and recording staff performance for the purpose of making management decisions on the staff.

Performance management is a joint process that involves both the supervisor and the employees to identify common goals which correlate to the higher goals of the institution (Rogers, 1995). In her study on Performance Improvement in the civil Service Marangu (2004), noted that performance management is a formal process through which employees and their supervisors/managers world over jointly define goals, major areas of responsibilities in terms of the expected results and the use of these measures as guides for future performance and subsequent review of performance. PA may therefore be said to be a continuous process which entails setting direction and standards, monitoring and measuring of performance.

Performance Appraisal began to be practiced in the world in 1940s. Merit rating was used for the first time around the Second World War as a method of justifying an employee's pay/wages (Moorhead and Griffin, 1992). The process was based on material outcomes where higher output was rewarded with higher wages/pay and vice-versa. However, early researchers realized that employees with almost equal ability to work and pay had different levels of motivation towards work and also performance (Dulewicz, 1989).

Today, PA is one of the key elements of any organization's drive towards competitive advantage through continuous performance improvement (Bratton and Gold,2003).

In the absence of a well structured PAS, managers will therefore have a tendency of judging employee work performance informally and also arbitrarily (Dulewicz, 1989).

In Singapore, a fast developing country for example, PA in the Public Service is known as PRAISE (Promotion, Ranking and Appraisal System). (Singapore Public Service Division, 2009). In the south Africa, PA has been used to help public servants know what is expected of them, increase motivation, identify poor performance, improve poor performance, recognize and reward outstanding performance (Erasmus, Schenk, Westhuizen and Wessels, 2005). PA in Great Britain according to the scholars is to set objectives and improve performance.

In Kenya, the appraisal system in use in the Civil Service was introduced in 2006. This was as a result of the Ministerial rationalization. The process was a Government initiative whose aim was to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery through review of systems, processes and structures in the ministries and departments (Guidelines on Deepening Rationalization, 2002).

One of the guidelines of Rationalization was the inception of a Performance Appraisal System (PAS) which would involve participatory work planning, performance discussions and performance evaluation. This was a deliberate effort aimed at linking staff appraisal to individual work plans.

The Vision 2030 goals include improved performance and quality service delivery, promotion of transformative leadership in the Government of Kenya (GOK) and improved GOK service delivery that meets expectations of the citizens, among other clients (Kenya Vision 2030, 2008).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The MSPS, has PAS which was established in July, 2006. PAS plays an integral role in the employer's performance management process as it translates employer's strategic goals into an individual employee's goals. PAS is aimed at helping in identifying staff capabilities and aptitudes that match the expectations of their jobs in terms of job knowledge, skills and attitudes, thus enhancing motivation, morale and job satisfaction. This is in line with one of the objectives of PAS in the Public Service which is to increase motivation to perform effectively (Draft Performance Appraisal system Policy for the Public Service, 2008).

Although the PAS was introduced in the MSPS four years ago, there is however no information on whether it has had any effect on employee motivation. In the report on Implementation of Staff Appraisal, (2008), the progress made and the challenges faced upon introduction of PAS were identified and highlighted. However, the report fails to provide findings on staff motivation. Other studies and reports on PAS appeared to provide unclear indication on impact of PAS on staff motivation. For instance, the study on Impact of Remuneration review on Productivity in the Public Service (2008), the Permanent Public Service Remuneration Review Board (PPSRRB), MSPS and the Productivity Centre of Kenya, Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development also appeared to have largely avoided a detailed description of PAS association with staff motivation. The study only superficially reported that some public servants believed that the reward and recognition systems in the Public Service were adequate and did not generally recognize performance. As a result, a detailed description of PAS on staff motivation and performance particularly in the civil service is necessary.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

This study sought to assess the effect of PAS job performance and employee motivation in the civil service, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to-

1. Assess perception of employees at MSPS
2. Examine levels of employees' motivation at MSPS.
3. Assess employee challenges in complying with PAS.
4. Identify and recommend areas of PAS improvement.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study was expected to contribute to the knowledge base on Human Resource management in the areas of PA and motivation. The study findings also provide a link between effective performance, appraisal and motivation in the MSPS and the larger Public Service in general. This may lead to attraction and retention of qualified personnel in the Public Service who will be assured of requisite rewards for high levels of performance. The study could benefit other organizations (both public and private) in coming up with an effective PAS. The study would also be useful to HR practitioners since one of the functions of HR management is performance

appraisal. The citizens of Kenya who may be interested in the area of PA could also benefit from the study findings. Finally, the study would help other researchers who might want to undertake research in the area of staff appraisal, performance and motivation.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focused on employees in Job Groups “H” to “U” in the MSPS headquarters, Nairobi.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Performance appraisal was expected to result in improved work performance through a motivated workforce. For this to happen, it would be assumed that each employee understands what levels and standards of performance is expected of him. PA involves four (4) basic component which have been summarized by Posthma and Campion,(2008) as goals, measurements, assessment and feedback. These components characterize the relationship between the supervisor and appraise which may result in motivation or lack of it.

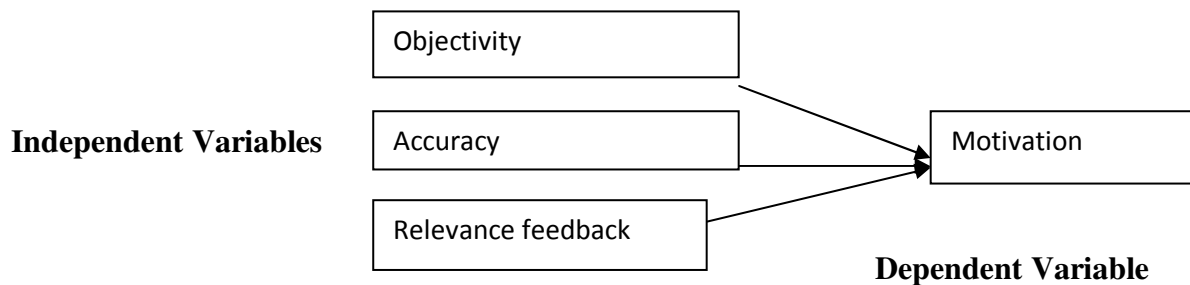


Fig 1.0 Schematic Conceptual Framework

Explanation on the Conceptual Framework

Employees’ goals are adopted from an organization’s mission, vision and strategic plan. In the Civil Service, they are cascaded from the Kenya Vision 2030. The goals are then broken down into targets and incorporated in the employee annual work plan. PA involves an employee knowing what is expected of him and staying focused with the help of the supervisor (Casio, 2003). This is only possible if the employee and his supervisor agree during the appraisal process. Assessment involves assessing employee’s performance against the targets or objectives set at the beginning of the appraisal period. Assessment is the review of an individual employee’s performance during the appraisal period. Assessment determines the extent to which the employee has met the set targets. During assessment, the actual performance of the employee is compared to the previous appraisal period and also what was agreed upon at the beginning of the present period. Regular assessment enable the employee to focus his attention on what he is expected to do (Casio, 2003). Feedback involves the appraiser providing the appraise with information on their performance from time to time. Positive feedback refers to emphasis being made on work done well while what needs to be improved is communicated to the employee through constructive criticism. The supervisor and the appraise should exchange views continuously on how performance can be improved.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Organizations aim at achieving high and sustained performance through the HR. PA is one of the important components in the rational and systematic process of HRM (Answers.com). The information obtained in the course of and at the end of PA process provides a foundation for recruitment and selection, training and development of existing staff, and motivating and maintaining a quality human resource through adequate and proper rewarding of their performance. Therefore without a reliable PAS anchored on the elements of objectivity, accuracy, relevance and feedback, the HRM system may fall apart. This may result in the total waste of the valuable human resource.

2.2 Theories of Motivation

Famous scholars such as Maslow A., Vroom V. and Herzberg F have tried to come up with various theories of motivation.

2.2.1 Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs Theory

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides an insight into what basically motivates employees. Maslow (1943), came up with five levels of needs. These are; Self Actualization (highest level), Esteem (level 4), Social belonging and Love needs (level 3), Safety (level 2) and Physiological (lowest level). The scholar believed that motivation is driven by the existence of these unsatisfied needs, Silva (2009). According to the theory, if employees are to be motivated, the lower level needs have to be met before the next higher level of needs. After the lower level of needs have been satisfied, the employee will be motivated to satisfy the next higher level of needs. An example is when an employee at the lowest level of the hierarchy will only be motivated by good pay in order to afford his basic needs rather than safety of his work area and stability of the job. The hierarchy of needs theory also shows that employees do differ from each other. If they are therefore to be motivated, the management will have to look into their needs first and then develop suitable motivation techniques. In an organization, the PA targets set at the beginning of an appraisal period may be viewed as some of the needs employees have to satisfy within the appraisal period.

2.2.2 Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's two factor theory basically identified two separate groups of factors that impacted strongly on motivation. His first group of factors was the hygiene factors which consisted of factors such as working conditions, quality of supervision, salary, status, safety, company policies and administration. The hygiene factors strongly influence feelings of dissatisfaction among employees which affected their job performance according to Wehrich and Koontz (1993). However, Herzberg also pointed out that although the presence of these factors will not basically motivate the employees as such, they are necessary to have them right in the first place, if the organization intends to motivate the factors. The second group of factors identified by Herzberg was the motivating factors which included recognition, achievement, responsibility, interesting job, growth and advancement to higher level tasks. According to him, these factors do bring job satisfaction among employees which will eventually lead to employee motivation.

Hertzberg's two factor theory may provide managers with an understanding as to how employees could be motivated. The theory also pointed out those factors motivating employees may not just be possible without the presence of intrinsic factors.

2.2.3 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

In his Expectancy Theory of 1964, Victor Vroom believed that employee effort paved the way for job performance and job performance led to rewards (Wehrich and Koontz, 1993). Vroom highlighted the fact that employees tend to believe that putting effort will lead to good performance and likewise the good performance will be rewarded. It is therefore these rewards that motivate the employees. If the rewards are positive and welcoming, then the employees will obviously be motivated, or else if they turn out to be negative or not attractive, then the chances of employees be de-motivated are high.

2.2.4 Adam's Equity Theory

Adam's equity theory of motivation points out the fact that managers should seek a fair balance between the employee's inputs (effort, loyalty, hard work, sacrifice e.t.c) and their outputs (recognition, salary, status e.t.c), in order to motivate employees (Wehrich and Koontz, 1993). He added that it is extremely important to make an employee feel that he is treated fairly if the managers are to achieve positive outcomes and motivate the employees effectively. If however the employees feel that they have been treated unfairly (their inputs are greater than the outputs), then they will be de-motivated and this will reduce their inputs such as effort.

Motivated employees are needed for an organization's survival in a highly competitive world. Motivated employees are more productive hence managers need to understand what motivates employees. One of the managerial functions is employee motivation. However this function is rather complex since what motivates an employee today may not necessarily motivate them tomorrow (Kovach, 1987). An example is when an employee's income increases; money becomes less of a motivator. In addition, as employees get older, interesting work becomes more of a motivator than pay (Linder, 1998). In a study on *Performance Improvement in Kenya Public Service*, (2004), Marangu noted that motivation is an aspect of management that requires human behavior to be manipulated in order to harmonize an individual employee's goals to this of the organization.

Therefore well motivated employees are those who work along clearly defined goals and who take action which will result in these goals being met. Employees who manage to motivate themselves seek, find and carry out work that satisfies their needs. However, majority of employees need to be motivated by the management through pay, praise, promotion, transfer, training and development in order to improve their performance.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study adopted stratified random sampling. This method was advantageous because it improves representativeness of the sample by reducing the sampling error where the sub-

populations vary as was the case in this study. The chapter also discusses the methodology that was used during data collection and analysis. It also covers the area of study, target population, sample size, sampling procedures data, collection instruments, methods of data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Location of the Study

The research was carried out at the Ministry of State for Public Service (MSPS) which is part of the central Government. The ministry has a total of about 600 officers ranging from the lowest rank (Job Group “A”) to the highest (Job Group “U”) at the time of the study. These officers are distributed in the departments located in Nairobi (HRM, HRD, MCS, PPSRRB and Finance and Administration) and GTIs (Mombasa, Matuga, Embu and Baringo) which are located outside Nairobi. Employees working outside Nairobi were not take part in the study due to time and financial constraints. In addition, Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) and Kenya Distance Learning Centre (KDLC) staff were not form part of the study since both do not fall under the central Government. The Departments which were included are those whose employees are paid directly from the Ministry’s payroll.

3.3 Target Population

The study population was drawn from the MSPS management cadre which comprises officers in Job “H” and above. These are the officers who were subjected to PA. There are 354 officers in these Job Groups at the Ministry.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The target population will be divided into twelve (12) sub-groups. Elements will then be selected randomly from each sub-group. The elements selected to represent each sub-group will be based on its size and the nature of its characteristics. A Job Group may for example comprise officers from different cadres (HRM,HRD officers and Management Consultants or Supporting staff).

The study was based at the Ministry headquarters due to some factor and financial constraints. The final group of selected employees was drawn from the 207 employees based at the Headquarters. These included top management (Job Groups “R”, “S”, “T”, and “U”), middle management (Job Groups “L”, “M”, “N”, “P” and “Q”) and junior management (Job Groups “H”, “J”, and “K”). A total of 74 respondents were selected from the twelve sub-groups. This was one third (1/3) of each sub-group rounded up to the higher whole number as indicated in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Sample Design, Sample Size and Categories

| Category(Job Group) | Total Population Size | Target Population (Ministry Hqs) | Sample Size |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| U | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| T | 2 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|----|
| S | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| R | 14 | 13 | 5 |
| Q | 18 | 13 | 5 |
| P | 41 | 35 | 13 |
| N | 44 | 24 | 8 |
| M | 27 | 14 | 5 |
| L | 25 | 11 | 4 |
| K | 38 | 26 | 9 |
| J | 77 | 44 | 15 |
| H | 61 | 21 | 7 |
| Total | 354 | 207 | 74 |

Source: Research Data

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used both primary and secondary data during the research. Primary data collection instruments were a combination of questionnaires and interview guides. In addition, the researcher made use of secondary data sources and literature. The questionnaires were self-made. To ensure that they were reliable, a pilot study involving seven (7) randomly selected respondents were carried out. The respondents came from various departments, but not the actual sample. The pilot study assisted the researcher in making the necessary corrections on the instruments, before carrying out the actual research. The questionnaire consisted of structured (close ended) and unstructured (open ended) questions. Unstructured questions were given to the respondents the freedom of response (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaires were also to be in two (2) parts. Part A sought personal data of the respondent and general data on the MSPS. Part B sought information related to PA and motivation. The questionnaires were administered to the junior and middle management staff (Job Groups “L”, to “Q”). Interview guides were administered to the top management (Job Group “R” and above).

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher edited all the data that was received using SPSS before actual data analysis is undertaken, to identify inconsistencies and establish uniformity. Through editing of the raw data, errors and omissions were detected and corrected (Kothari, 2008). Quantitative analysis was subjected to the data that is quantifiable and was presented in a way that was simple and easy to understand. This was by use of graphs, tables, percentages and textual form or explanation. Data from the open questions were analyzed qualitatively. The data was organized into persistent areas of study based on the research questions. The presentation was in narrative form describing the researcher’s objectives.

4.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the result of the field research. Quantitative and qualitative techniques were used in analyzing the data. The data was collected from 56 out of the target population of 74. This presented 76% response rate. This percentage is high enough to guarantee acceptability of the research. Two (2) managers were not available for interview while 16 employees did not return the questionnaires given to them.

4.1.1 Department

The respondents who took part in the study were from four Departments namely: Finance and Administration, HRD, HRM and MCS. According to the findings, majority of the respondents (56%) were from HRD department .

4.1.2 Gender

Data from questionnaires were collected from 50 respondents out of the target 66 in the sample. This population comprised 54 % male and 46 % females. This implies that more men than women took part in this study as illustrated in figure 4.1

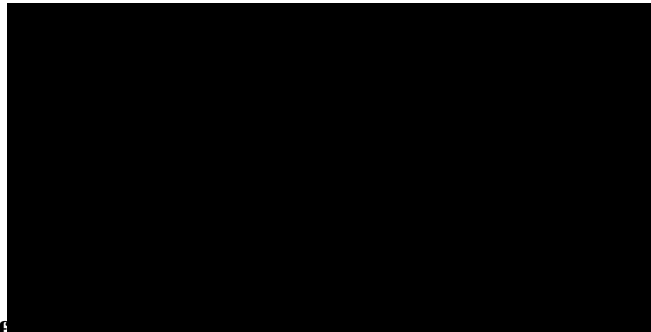


Figure 4.1 Gender

Table 4.2 Impact of IA on work performance

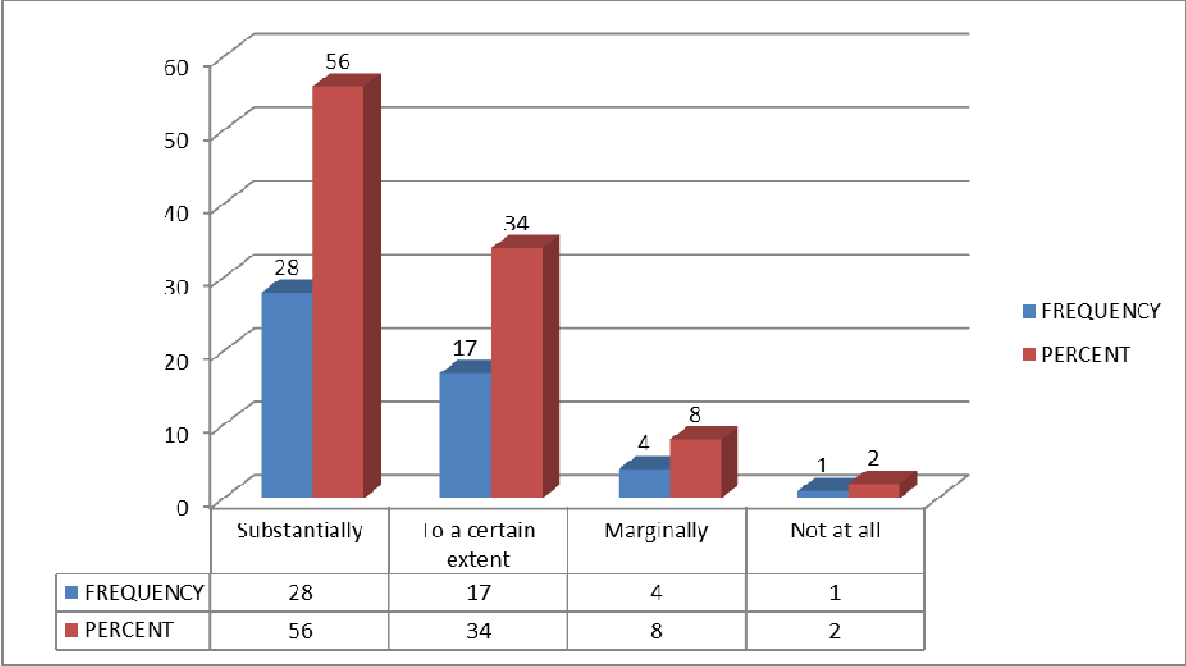
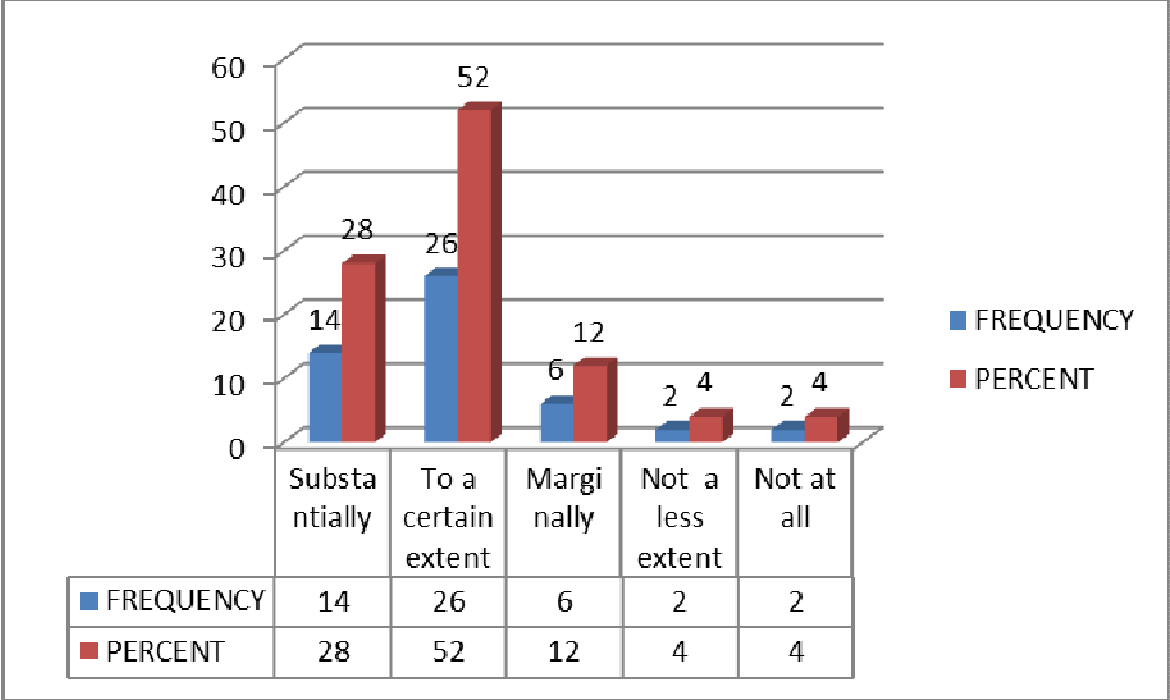


Table 4.3 Relationship between PA and Job satisfaction



When asked to explain the responses on the extent to which PA gave job satisfaction, ten (20%) of the respondents reported that targets were set through PA, Seven (14%) reported that the supervisor was always in touch with what was being done. Fifteen (30%) indicated that it helped one to identify their training needs and the areas that needed improvement while five (10%)

reported that PA helped one to focus on the core activities. Other responses that were listed were that it helped eliminate the lazy employees, motivated one to work hard and, rewarded those hard working employees.

It was however noted that some of the respondents did indicate that PA alone should not be used for assessment because it did not address some issue like motivation and the work environment. The findings also indicated that sometimes there was little relation between the set targets and the achievement. Some respondents reported that sometimes the process was subjective depending on the appraisee's relationship with their supervisor.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Objectivity of the Performance Appraisal is a critical HR process. However it is hard to eliminate subjectivity as the process is based on human judgment. Human performance is also largely qualitative; it is not always possible to measure it quantitatively (Singh, 2002) this research was no exception to this limitation. The majority of the managers at the MSPS reported that the process was objective. The reason given were that the process involves joint setting of targets, gives room for discussion between the employee and the supervisor, the assessment is based on set targets and that supervisors are able to monitor the performance of the employees. This helps the employees to work hard to meet the set targets.

However, a minority of the managers felt that PA was subjective because it is hard to measure some value like honesty and integrity. In addition PA may be used by some supervisors to settle scores with their juniors.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of this research, the researcher concluded that employees at the MSPS are usually involved in the setting of performance targets. They are also substantially appraised against the targets set at the beginning of the appraisal period. Performance targets are clearly defined and employees understand them. PA is also carried out in the right way at the MSPS and makes employees effective. The study revealed that employees were given feedback to enable them improve their performance. This shows that PA has a positive impact on the employee's performance which leads to motivation. The Ministry was for example number seven in the recent performance rankings released by the President and Prime minister.

However there is need for discussions between appraisee and supervisors throughout the appraisal period. The discussions will enhance performance at the individual, Departmental and Ministry levels since there will be continuous flow of idea. The top management also needs to wholly support PA if the system is to be effective.

In addition PA should not be the only for assessment because it does not address some issue like motivation, honesty, integrity and the work environment. It is also subjective. To enhance motivation amongst the Ministry's employees therefore, both the manager and the supervisor should provide continuous feedback.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for consideration by the MSPS so as to enhance the employee's work performance:

- PA is a good management tool but it should be subjected to continuous reviews in line with the changing trends.
- All stakeholders should be consulted during the PA process. This should include use of 360-degree feedback.
- Supervisors need to be continuously trained on the appraisal process.
- Employees need to be sensitized on the importance of PA especially in the setting of targets. This would lead to SMART which would be possible to meet.
- There is need to reward the high achievers so that high performance standards are maintained. This may be achieved through introduction of the high-fliers scheme.
- The top management should ensure that PA is used as a corrective but not a punishing instrument. It is only when PA is used as a corrective tool that it can bring a motivation workforce.

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