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Emperical Study on Assessment of Performance Appraisal and Reward Management System: A Case Study of Malawi Police Service

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ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal and rewards management system have long played a central role in motivating employees to help achieve organizational objectives. However, the performance appraisal process does not provide consistent recommendations for improvement in managing rewards based performance in the Malawi Police Service. This study examined performance appraisal and rewards management system in the Malawi Police service and the effect it mediates to employee rewards management outcomes. The study found that employees in the Malawi Police Service are not satisfied with the current performance appraisal tools. The respondents strongly endorsed for new paradigm through rewards based performance matrix which will be able to provide feedback which has a multiple sources and with statistically positive relationship with employee developments and performance. The results have an important policy implication because the findings of this study imply that there is no working system to appraisal employees' performance for the purpose of management of rewards.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Performance Appraisal information is used to find out whether an employee requires additional training and development. Deficiencies in performance may be due to inadequate knowledge or skills. Performance appraisal helps a manager to find out whether he needs additional training for improving his current job performance. (Akrani G, 2011). Armstrong (2017) defined performance appraisal as " a method by which the job performance of an employee is reported and evaluated and is a motivation force to employee growth, development and improved performance. Performance appraisal system is one of the most important management practices. In many organizations performance appraisals remain one of great paradoxes of effective human resource management. On one hand, performance appraisal system provides valuable performance information to a number of critical human resource activities, such as the allocation of rewards e.g merit pay, promotion, feedback on the development and assessment of training needs and other human resource system evaluation, e.g selection predictions and performance documentation for legal purposes (Clevelland, Murphy and Williams, 1989). In short, performance appraisal system offers much potential for enhancing the effectiveness of human resource decisions and for satisfying employee needs for performance feedback, (IIgen, Fisher and Taylor, 1979). Performance appraisal helps managers to find out whether the employee needs additional training to improve his current job performance. Similarly, if the performance appraisal results show that the employee can perform well in higher position, then he is given training for the higher level position. Most employees are very interested in knowing how well they are doing at present and how they can do better in future. Employees want this information to improve their performance in order to get promotions and merit pay. Proper performance feedback can improve the employees' future performance. It also gives him satisfaction and motivation (G. Akran, 2011).

2.0 ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Police Senior Management or Police Service Commission as a case may, is mandated to continually assess the actual or expected performance of police officers. Currently there is no performance appraisal and prediction tools in the Malawi Police Service regardless of the fact that performance appraisal is a controlled and conducted exercise in the public service. Performance appraisal (predictions) for promotion purposes are supposed to be controlled and frequently conducted by the Human Resources Department or the Police Service Commission as the case may be, whereas transfers and placements are solely handled by the Department of Human Resource Management. The use of Police Service Commission was established for some fairly formal procedures for promotions and merit rewards to deserving police officers. While many Service Commissions are looking at various ways to upgrade their performance appraisal procedures for assigning officers according to their interests, capabilities and future career growth potential, there is none in the Malawi Police Service regardless that performance appraisal results, provide a basis for decisions regarding compensation, rewards and punishment. Section 155 of the Malawi Constitution established the Police Service Commission. Section 13 of the Police Act outlines the functions of the Police Service Commission, some being to formulate schemes of recruitment, provides for and determine the principles to be followed in making promotions in the Police Service for the purpose of ensuring uniformity of treatment of, and the standards to be attained by police officers of each rank to qualify for promotion, and to adopt general measures necessary to guarantee efficiency and transparency in relation to appointments, promotions, and disciplinary control in the Police Service. Although Police Service Regulations under article 22 provides for annual performance appraisal reports by supervisors to Police Service Commission, there is no clear performance appraisal and reward management system in place known to employees. The performance

appraisal and rewards management system of the Malawi Police Service was identified and faulted by 2017 Establishments and Functional Review report as a cause for a failed organization effectiveness and against performance management system that Malawi Government introduced in 2008. This finding triggered the need to conduct this research in order to investigate the performance appraisal and reward management system in the Malawi Police Service.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Candy and Dubblin (1994), defined performance appraisal as the process of identifying, observing**,** measuring and developing human resources in organization. Performance Appraisal is the systematic evaluation of the individual with respect to his or her performance on the job and his or her potential for development. Performance appraisal is accomplished by establishing personal performance objectives that are congruent with overall organizational goals. In return, then encouraging individual performance through performance appraisal which promote overall organization performance. According to Ketsen (1996), performance appraisal is an important process for influencing both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of employees and their attitudes towards companies. According to Armstrong (2020), performance management processes have come to the fore in recent years as means of providing a more integrated and continuous approach to the management of performance. He further stated that performance management can play a major role in providing for an integrated and coherent range of human resource management processes that are mutually supportive and contribute as a whole to improving organization effectiveness. Chatterjee (2018) agrees with Armstrong by saying that most organizations introduce performance management and appraisal to develop and improve individual performance and promote quality production of product and services.

The definition of performance appraisal is very important, because it encompasses all important components needed for the well performed appraisal process. Mone (2012), states that the definition shows that the performance appraisal should not only be the evaluation of the past. The supervisor who makes the appraisal, should focus on the future and on the improvement of the results. The definition suggest that effective performance appraisal can improve the employee's performance in the organization, which also means increased employee motivation (Jackson & Schuler, 2010). Performance appraisal can and should be linked to the performance improvement process and can also be used to identify training needs and potential, agreed future objectives, support career development and solve existing problems (Brown & Benson, 2010).

Research by Mone (2012) on the effects of performance appraisal, identified that the methods of performance appraisal also go a long way in determining the rewards systems, employee satisfaction and the success and competitive positioning of an organization. The overall objectives of the performance appraisal system are to let subordinates know formally how their current performance is being rated. It identifies those subordinates who deserve higher pay/ emoluments. Identifies those employees who require additional training and earmarks promising and outstanding employees for promotion (Prince & Lawler, 2012).

Performance appraisal data are used in sustaining and enhancing employee performance, aid to create and maintaining a satisfactory level of performance by employees on their present jobs. The mere knowledge that their performance is being assessed and that such an assessment will have an important bearing on their future within the organization, is a powerful incentive for them to sustain their present level of performance. Armstrong (2009) found that when the actual evaluation process is followed by a constructive appraisal interview, it is likely to contribute towards a more effective or improved performance on the part of many individuals (Armstrong, 2009). Therefore, performance appraisal has a positive effect on employee performance and rewards management of an organization.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Performance Appraisal and Rewards Management System is premised from Goal Setting Theory. This theory was propounded by Edwin Locke who examined the effects of setting goals on employee's job performance. (Locke & Latham, 2006), examines the effects of setting goals on employees as very core to the whole process of performance appraisal. The goal setting theory argues that specific and challenging goals with appropriate feedback contribute to improved performance among employees. Criteria for effective goal that drives performance includes goals being achievable, relevant, time bound, illicit commitment and ensure task complexity. Locke further states that more specifically, targets or goals to be achieved direct by the employees and enhances the employees in understanding the amount of energies, and exertion required to put in the job to achieve their targets or the organizational goals within the short, medium and long term (Lunenburg, 2011). Specific goals can boost motivation and performance by leading employees to focus their attention on specific objectives. Employees then put extra efforts to develop new strategies to face complex challenges to goal attainment, (Latham & Locke, 2006). Thus, goal setting theory together with performance management system impacts employee performance. The outcomes act as inputs for setting the next level of goals. This process can be repeated in a cycle to improve the performance of the employee (Appelbaum, Roy, & Gilliland, 2011). The Expectancy Theory of Motivation was proposed by Victor Vroom in his study of Organizational behaviour. The theory emphasizes the need for organizations to relate rewards directly to performance and to ensure that the rewards provided are deserved and wanted by the recipient. Victor Vroom (1964) expectancy theory is a management theory that focused on motivation. Vroom defines motivation as a process governing choices among alternative forms of voluntary activities and processes controlled by an individual. The individual makes choices based on estimates of how well the expected results of a given behaviour are going to match up with or eventually lead to the desired results. Therefore, motivation is a product of the individual's expectancy that certain efforts will lead to the intended performance. This theory proposes that an individual will behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behaviour over others due to what they expect the results of that selected behaviour to be,(Oliver. R, 1974). However, at the core of the theory is the cognitive process of how an individual processes the different motivational elements. Expectancy theory is about the mental process regarding choices or choosing. It explains the process that an individual undergoes to make choices

5.0 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

This research study is premised on the philosophies of ontology and epistemology. According to SAGE Online Dictionary of Social Research Methods (2006), it defines Ontology as a concept concerned with the existence of and relationship between different aspects of society such as social actors, cultural norms and social structures. Ontological issues are concerned with questions pertaining to the kind of things that are within the society. Richards (2003) defines ontology as the assumptions we make about the kind and nature of reality and what exists.

The other philosophy is that of epistemology which in general is the assumption we make about the kind or the nature of knowledge, or how it is possible to find out about the world, (Richards, 2003). According to Crofty (1998), epistemology is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it. It involves knowledge and necessarily, it embodies a certain understanding of what that knowledge entails.

The study will also employ the pragmatism philosophy that states that concepts are only relevant when they support an action and that reality matters when it comes to finding solutions to a particular problem. "It strives to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, accurate and rigorous knowledge and different contextualized experiences. It does this by considering theories, concepts, ideas, hypotheses and research findings not in an abstract form, but in-terms of the roles they play as instruments of thought and action, and in terms of their practical consequences in specific contexts. Reality matters to pragmatists as a practical effect of ideas, and knowledge is valued for enabling actions to be carried out successfully. For pragmatists, research starts with a problem, and aims to contribute practical solutions that inform future practices. Researcher values drive the reflexive process of inquiry, which is initiated by doubt and a sense that something is wrong or out of place, and which recreates belief when the problem has been resolved. As pragmatists are more interested in practical outcomes than abstract distinctions, their research may have considerable variation in terms of how 'objectivist' and 'subjectivists' it turns out to be. This would mean that most important determinant for your research design and strategy would be the research problem that you would try to address your research question. Your research question, in turn, would likely incorporate the pragmatist emphasis of practical outcomes" (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008 cited in Saunders et al, 2019). The researcher opted for this philosophy as he wanted to get the reality of what was really happening in order to find solutions to the problems. The philosophy emphasizes on practical solutions and outcomes.

The other philosophy of the study is positivism, Interpretivism, critical realism and post modernism (Sounders et al, 2019). Positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law like generalization. Positivist believes that reality is external and objective, and knowledge is only significant if it is based on observations of this external reality, (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016).

Interpretivism is an approach to social science that emphasizes the importance of insider's viewpoints to understand social realities. It emphasizes that human beings are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings. The purpose is to create new richer understanding and interpretations of social words and contexts. Interpretivists researchers deal with various complexities by collecting what is meaning to their research participants, (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). On the other hand, the philosophy of critical realism focuses on explaining what we see and experience, in terms of the underlying structures of reality that shape the observable events. It emphasizes the role of language and of power relations, seeking to question accepted ways of thinking and gives voice to alternative marginalized views (Saunders and Thornhill, 2016).

6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a case study strategy. According to Saunders et al, (2012, p.179) "A case study explores a research topic or phenomenon within its context, or within a number of real life contexts". It differs from the survey strategy where, although the research is undertaken in context, the ability to explore and understand this context is limited by a number of variables for which data can be collected. The case study strategy is relevant as the researcher wanted to gain a rich understanding of the context of what happens in the organization. According to Saunders et al (2012) "A case study strategy has considerable ability to generate answers to the question why? As well as 'what' and 'how' questions. For this reasons the case study strategy is most used in explanatory and exploratory research. The methodological choice adopted is qualitative. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences, (Saunders and Lewis, 2016).

6.1 RESULTS

The researcher sampled 100 employees obtained using probability sampling technique, of simple random sampling where every employee was assigned a number and then randomly picked from a subset of the population. The researcher employed this technique because it is easy to implement and also accorded each employee a chance of being equally picked. The researcher also used convenient sampling in interviewing strategic decision makers in the Human Resource Department to appreciate the current system employed by the organization against the assumption of the researcher. The researcher used highly structured methodology to facilitate replication, an important issue to ensure reliability. The researcher conducted a pretest where the questionnaire was pretested on the people that are eligible to participate in the study. It was also presented to an expert and project supervisor to ensure its validity and reliability and guidance. Out of the estimated sample of the population 76 responded representing 76% response rate. Below is the extent to which the employees perceive the effects of lack performance appraisal in reward management.

6.1.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND REWARDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On the relationship between performance appraisal and rewards system the study finding reveals that performance appraisal and rewards management system are directly related and from the results most of the respondents agreed that rewards should be based on performance of the individual employee

through a completed performance appraisal form from immediate supervisor. This is denoted by (Mean 24.3 Std Dev=1.713) which imply that generally, the respondents understand that performance appraisal help to improve the outcome of rewards in the organization. These findings agree with the views of Bacal (2003) that reviewed improved employee's outputs through when the employees are satisfied with the process as accurate and fair. They also concurred with Savey and Syme(1996) who posited that there is a strong relationship between employees job satisfaction and appropriate performance reviews where it was argued that the appraisal reviews correlate well with increased responsibility, promotion and pay rise. Similarly, the findings revealed that performance appraisal enhances personal commitments to the organization as most of the respondents agreed with the statements whilst others were neutral, these findings agree with the findings of Salvarajan and Cloninger(2012b) where performance appraisal system is often considered one of the most important factors for employee motivation. The findings indicate that the substantial proportion of the respondents suggested that the performance appraisal improves job performance at work as regular appraisals lead to informed management decision in terms of who is supposed to be rewarded, and it also lead to employee motivation and increased performance at the end (Selvarajan & Cloninger (2012).

In the contrary, this study results revealed that substantial number of respondents disagreed that there is a close relationship between performance appraisal and rewards management system. This implies that most employees feel that performance appraisal had no bearing to rewards management in the M.P.S. This results is reflecting that rewards which the organization give to employees are not based on actual performance of the individual employee. This brings in the notion of unfair rewards management system. These findings concur with Ohabunwa(2009) who found that the performance appraisals are sometimes highly prone to biases and regency effect rating can be manipulated because performance outcomes are linked to future rewards like promotion and good postings. Therefore, these outcomes bring in the aspect of understanding of the importance of performance appraisal in organization being a continuous process and not a one off events that only happens once a year. The study finding established that the lack of a functional appraisal system is not consistent as Vasset, Marnburg, and Furunes (2008) singled out conflicts and personal biases as factors that affect how individual appraiser rate their appraiser. Therefore, the findings of this study reveal the conflict that come out when promotion and placement are made, affects working relationship at workplaces. The study found that performance appraisal is essential and directly correlated to promotion and job placements.

6.1.2 EFFECTS OF REWARDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO EMPLOYEES MOTIVATION

In this section the study intended to investigate the process of performance appraisal in relation to the outcomes of the rewards that followed. The findings of the study revealed that rewards are not based on performance (Mean =25.3 Std Dev=2.460). These findings show that performance based rewards enhances employee satisfaction and therefore, have effects on on employee motivation. The study concurs with the findings of Kirauki (2014) who found that employee appreciate performance based rewards not otherwise. Beside that it has been found by Skarlick and Folger (2007) in their study that there is a conflict on individual workers with colleague's goal's which means that a person's desire for rewards is dependent upon system in place. This means that the present system is not clear and therefore there is a need to put in place the performance based reward system that will be able to strike the balance between individual performance and rewards outcome such as placement and promotion.

The study revealed that the current Annual Confidential Report are not effective in addressing performance based rewards. This finding concurred with finding of Malcolm and Jackson (2002) which emphasized that effective rewards policy reflects and support the achievements of the business strategy, recognized contribution and links rewards to employee performance. The findings agree with the theory that incentives for excellent performance will motivate employees or will be the basis for their performance (Pulakos, 2009b). This implies that employees knowing the criteria for rewards being their performance appraisal rating will motivate employees to work hard in order to improve their performance. Therefore, employees' failure to ascertain what criteria and appraisal tools used in the organization to measure their performance for the purposes of rewards management decision is demotivating factor.

6.1.3 THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND REWARDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Management plays a crucial role in making sure that effective and efficient working system are being put in place when it comes to effective management ethos. Performance appraisal and rewards management system are the duty of the Management team by developing deliberate policies and systems that will assist them in distribution of rewards. The findings of the study found that there is lack of proper tools in the organization to monitor performance of employees for the purposes of rewards. This has been established during group discussion when the respondents stated that due to lack of proper working system of performance and rewards management system, promotion and placement decisions are marred with conflict of interests from management team, which led to political influence in decision making process when it's time to reward outstanding performers. The findings imply that there is a need for deliberate policies to be put in place and monitored by Department of Human Resource Development which should champion implementation of performance appraisal and monitor the rewarding processes. This finding is supported by several literatures that shows that performance appraisal and reward management need to be adequately coordinated and monitored. In addition, Management evaluation of the appraisal and rewards system on regular basis will increase effectiveness of the system. Therefore, in order to improve the relationship between performance appraisal and rewards management system the study suggest that the organization should develop clear performance targets to employees that are tailored towards rewards such as promotion to outstanding employees. It is also evident that the present system of Annual Confidential Report (ACR) is not effective as it is not a clear system of measuring someone's actual performance for purposes of rewards. The researcher therefore, recommend that modern performance appraisal tools be developed and adopted to assist in measuring individual performance. Tools like the Management by Objectives, is of superior importance as was posited by Armstrong (2020) that it helps in making superior judgment making decision about their subordinates, such a judgmental role makes the position of the supervisor rather difficult and apparently antagonistic. MBO is is not a measure of employees behaviour rather it is a measure of each employee's contribution to the success of the organization. It is a complete system of planning and control, and a complete

philosophy of management. With MBO superiors and subordinate get together and jointly agree upon and list the principal duties and areas of responsibility of the individuals' job. In this the employee set his own short term performance goals or targets in cooperation with superiors. The superior guides the goal setting process to insure that it relates to the realities and needs of the organization.

7.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Performance appraisal is the most important functions of HR management engaging in gauging employee performance and based on which employees become eligible for promotion. Performance Appraisal and Rewards Management system play a key role in any organization to check the progress towards the desired goals and objectives. The findings of the study are going to assist Management to improve the rewards management through performance based approach. It has been found that without effective working system the organization will not improve in its activities. A research with a larger sample size may be required with management support to conduct a holistic fact finding in order to improve its management system. The research recommend that future research should consult this study which has laid a foundation for in-depth understanding of the challenges of failure to have a working system by comparing and build on the findings of this research.

The study established that with effective performance appraisal Malawi Police Service will have a disciplined employee who will dedicate much on their efforts in pursuit of rewards. This will be achieved because employee annual expectations on performance based will increase their dedication to work and therefore, improve the overall output of the organization through individual commitments. The study recommends that for effective rewards management, the organization should champion and develop rewards management policy and start monitoring its implementation. This strategy must be incorporated into the Organizational Strategic Plan and must be championed and coordinated with Strategic Managers in all Stations. It is also recommended that annual performance appraisals should be evaluated regularly in order to identify the gaps in individual employees for possible improvements through training and on job coaching to improve their delivery of public service based on their areas of specialization. The periodic appraisal should collate with annual rewards which are promotions and the same should reflect the inputs the individual officer dedicated to the organization.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is no performance appraisal which is related to reward based management in the Malawi Police Service. The Annual Confidential Reports which is the only tool to document employee's performance annually is no longer submitted to human resource management department as per the requirement of Article 22 of the Malawi Police Regulations (1966). The Organization rewards system is a guesswork and depends on who know who at that particular time of the decision. Regardless that the study found that performance appraisal is vital tool for effective organization because it enhances employee performance through rewards, it seems the system is not implemented as there is no individual performance target in the organization to measure how the person has performed in the preceding year. Based on the findings, the study concludes that rewards in the M.P.S is not based on performance and as such the rewards are not objectively and fairly distributed to employees. The rewarded employees most of the time do not much the performance inputs into the organization as observed in figure 3 on employee's perception of the rewards management system.

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