International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, Vol 6, Issue 10, pp 3020-3025, October, 2025

WWW.IJRPR.COM

International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

To Examine the Effects of Allowances On Employee Performance at Njombe District Council, Tanzania.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of allowances on employee performance at Njombe District Council, Tanzania. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory, the research investigated how transport allowances, housing allowances, and medical allowances influence employee motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 133 employees across multiple departments. The findings indicate that allowances significantly reduce financial burdens, enhance punctuality, support employee well-being, and strengthen organizational commitment. The study also found that allowances are most effective when integrated with broader motivation strategies, including recognition, training, and performance feedback. These results suggest that well-structured and timely allowances serve as key incentives that foster a stable, motivated, and efficient workforce, improving overall organizational performance. Recommendations include equitable distribution, timely disbursement, and periodic evaluation of allowance schemes alongside supportive human resource management practices to maximize their impact.

Keywords: Allowances, Employee Performance, Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Njombe District Council

Effects of Allowances on Employee Performance at Njombe District Council

Introduction

Globally, employee performance has been a major concern for organizations, particularly in the public sector where service delivery is directly linked to workforce motivation and efficiency. Incentives, including allowances, are widely recognized as effective tools for enhancing employee commitment and productivity. According to Kahn (2017), workplace incentives foster motivation, commitment, and a sense of purpose among employees, leading to improved organizational outcomes. Employees who receive allowances such as transport, housing, and medical support are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and efficiency compared to those who do not (Saks, 2016). Furthermore, engaged employees contribute to teamwork, problem-solving, and innovation, which are essential in driving organizational effectiveness.

Studies conducted across various countries highlight those allowances significantly reduce financial stress, increase employee morale, and lower turnover rates, ultimately contributing to higher performance (Schaufeli et al., 2020). For instance, in developing economies, allowances play a vital role in bridging income gaps and sustaining employees' welfare, thereby improving punctuality, attendance, and commitment to duties (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). This global evidence underscores the relevance of examining how allowances affect employee performance, particularly in public institutions such as district councils, where service delivery depends heavily on the motivation and efficiency of employees.

Rich and Crawford (2010) observed that workplace incentives directly influence job performance by increasing efficiency and reducing errors. Engaged employees tend to focus better, work with greater precision, and complete tasks more effectively compared to disengaged staff. Furthermore, incentives reduce stress and burnout, enabling employees to sustain high levels of productivity (Bakker & Leiter, 2020). This demonstrates that workplace incentives not only improve output but also safeguard employee well-being, which is vital for long-term performance.

Li et al. (2022) identified an inverted U-shaped relationship between workplace incentives and performance, suggesting that moderate incentives enhance productivity, but excessive engagement can lead to diminishing returns. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2022) found that engaged employees exhibit innovative behavior, generating ideas that drive organizational success. Conversely, Ahmed et al. (2023) warned that toxic environments where incentives are undermined by harassment or favoritism erode trust and reduce productivity. These findings highlight the need for balanced and fair incentive practices in organizations.

Robbins (2021) argued that employees are the most critical determinant of organizational success, particularly in competitive environments. For service organizations, employee behavior and engagement directly affect customer satisfaction and outcomes. Latham and Budworth (2017) reinforced this by noting that workplace incentives are strong predictors of long-term organizational performance. Incentives, therefore, are not optional but essential for building committed and effective workforces.

Moradi and Yazdani (2019) found that organizations that meet employee needs through incentives and fair treatment are more likely to achieve high performance. Satisfied employees often demonstrate higher commitment and productivity, which strengthens overall organizational resilience. Robbins (2021) supported this by emphasizing that performance is largely a function of employee satisfaction and motivation, both of which are nurtured through proper incentive structures.

Arnold and Silvester (2018) suggested that organizations should actively pursue employee engagement strategies to maintain long-term effectiveness. Similarly, Sohail et al. (2020) demonstrated that engaged employees report higher job satisfaction and better performance outcomes compared to disengaged peers. Committed staff form the backbone of both public and private organizations, making incentives essential to sustaining performance.

Thompson and Phua (2021) asserted that management plays a crucial role in providing incentives that drive employee commitment and performance. These may include financial benefits such as bonuses, or non-financial rewards such as recognition, promotions, or professional development opportunities (Latham & Budworth, 2017). By adopting varied incentive practices, organizations ensure that employees remain motivated, enthusiastic, and committed to achieving organizational objectives.

Gallup (2022) reported that globally, only 23% of employees are engaged, yet organizations with high engagement demonstrate greater productivity and profitability. In Africa, Emergence Growth (2022) similarly highlighted that engaged employees show reduced absenteeism, stronger commitment, and improved workplace morale. In East Africa, Q-Sourcing Servtec (2022) found that organizations prioritizing incentives experienced reduced turnover, increased profitability, and stronger morale. These findings reinforce the practical importance of employee engagement and incentives.

Skinner (2019) emphasized that in Tanzania, both public and private organizations must ensure employee satisfaction to improve performance outcomes. However, Harper (2014) cautioned that rigid government systems and limited resources often undermine incentives, particularly in public sector organizations. Employees in many government entities rely mainly on salaries and small allowances, limiting their engagement and innovation. This challenge is also visible in local governments like Njombe District Council, where budget constraints and systemic issues affect the effectiveness of incentive programs.

Mugenda (2017) noted that Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Tanzania frequently struggle to optimize productivity despite introducing various incentive programs. For Njombe District Council, initiatives such as community mobilization and allowances have been implemented to encourage employee engagement. However, challenges persist due to resource shortages, competition with the private sector, and skills gaps. Recognizing these realities, the Government of Tanzania has introduced regulations such as the Public Service (Tanzania Foreign Service) Regulations, 2016*,* to standardize workplace practices. Nevertheless, ensuring that incentives translate into sustained employee performance remains a pressing issue.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides a foundational framework for understanding the role of allowances in employee performance. According to Maslow, individuals are motivated by a series of hierarchical needs, beginning with physiological and safety needs and progressing toward social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Allowances such as housing, transport, and medical benefits directly address employees' lower-level needs, thereby reducing financial stress and creating a stable foundation for higher-level motivation. When employees' basic and security needs are satisfied, they are more likely to pursue growth, achievement, and self-actualization in their work, which enhances overall performance and commitment to organizational objectives (Maslow, 1943; Neher, 1991).

Herzberg's two-factor theory further explains how allowances influence employee motivation and performance. Herzberg distinguished between hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivators, which foster job satisfaction and performance. In this context, allowances function as hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction by ensuring fair compensation and financial security. While allowances alone may not fully motivate employees to achieve peak performance, they create an essential baseline that enables motivators such as recognition, responsibility, and achievement to flourish. This implies that for organizations like Njombe District Council, providing adequate allowances not only prevents dissatisfaction but also supports an enabling environment where motivators can drive higher employee productivity and service delivery (Herzberg et al., 1959; Alshmemri et al., 2017).

Empirical Review

The Effects of Allowances on Employee Performance

Agustina and Indrawan (2024) highlight those allowances are widely used by governments and organizations to stimulate employee motivation and productivity. In the public sector, these benefits are often structured to compensate for additional duties, support employee welfare, and ensure that staff are committed to delivering quality services. For district councils like Njombe, allowances may help address challenges of motivation in environments where base salaries are low compared to private sector standards.

Mfikwa, Kisawike, and Golyama (2022) found that financial incentives in Iringa Municipal Council contributed positively but not significantly to employee performance. Although financial incentives explained about 52% of the variance in performance, statistical insignificance suggests that allowances alone cannot guarantee improved outcomes. This implies that allowances at Njombe District Council may also require complementary factors such as effective supervision, adequate resources, and recognition.

PDPR Study (2024) in Njombe demonstrated that non-monetary benefits—such as recognition, career advancement, and work-life balance—had a significant positive relationship with employee performance. This shows that allowances in the broader sense (monetary and non-monetary) are key in motivating employees. For Njombe District Council, incorporating both financial and non-financial allowances could therefore improve service delivery.

Ngogo (2021) reported in Ludewa District Council that while remuneration influenced motivation, employees also expressed dissatisfaction with delays and insufficiency of allowances. Staff emphasized that working conditions and resources play a crucial role in shaping their willingness to perform. This suggests that even in Njombe, allowances may not reach their full effect unless combined with conducive working environments.

The Citizen (2022) noted that the Tanzanian government increased civil servants' per diem and extra-duty allowances, signaling recognition of their importance in motivating employees. However, sustainability of such increments remains uncertain due to budget limitations. Njombe District Council employees may thus experience disparities between policy intent and practical implementation.

IPP Media (2025) reported that the government ordered the payment of pending leave allowances for public employees, indicating ongoing challenges with the timely disbursement of allowances. Delays reduce trust and may demotivate employees who rely on allowances as part of their income. This shows that allowances' effectiveness is not only about amount but also timeliness.

Armstrong and Taylor (2020), drawing on motivation theories, argue that expectancy and equity frameworks explain how allowances influence performance. Expectancy theory suggests employees perform better when rewards are linked to effort, while equity theory emphasizes fairness in distribution. Applied to Njombe District Council, allowances must therefore be fairly allocated and clearly tied to performance for them to be effective.

Siyani and Sudarmo (2024) found that allowances, organizational culture, and work discipline jointly enhance employee performance in local government. This indicates that allowances should not be studied in isolation, but within a broader system of motivation and organizational management. For Njombe, strengthening discipline and culture alongside allowances may provide stronger performance outcomes.

Mudhofar (2024) emphasized that performance allowances positively affect both individual and organizational performance when aligned with motivation and job satisfaction. His findings underscore those allowances must be designed with performance-based criteria to maximize their effectiveness. Njombe District Council could benefit from aligning its allowance system to measurable performance targets.

Mtawa, Ngowi, and Ibrahimu (2024) observed that fringe benefits strongly influenced retention in Njombe District Council. While retention differs from direct performance, long-serving employees tend to accumulate experience and enhance overall council efficiency. Thus, allowances can indirectly improve performance by reducing staff turnover.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study focused on examining the effects of workplace incentives on employee performance in Njombe District Council. A mixed research approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional research design that enabled data collection at one point in time, allowing the researcher to capture employee perceptions and organizational practices related to allowances, acknowledgments, and bonuses. This design was suitable for assessing relationships between workplace incentives and employee performance without requiring long-term follow-up.

The study was conducted at Njombe District Council in Tanzania, selected due to its challenges with workplace incentives and productivity. The target population included 200 employees from different departments such as administration, human resources, finance, health, business, and community development. Using a standard formula, a sample size of 133 respondents was determined. A simple random sampling technique was applied to ensure that every employee had an equal chance of being selected, thus reducing bias and enhancing representativeness.

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data on incentive strategies and their impact on performance, while interviews with key informants provided deeper insights into how incentives were managed and perceived within the council. In addition, secondary data were obtained from institutional records, government reports, and previous academic studies to supplement and validate primary findings. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software for descriptive analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data for interpretation.

To ensure accuracy, validity, and reliability of data were tested. Validity was assessed to confirm adequacy of the sample, while reliability was measured to ensure consistency of the questionnaire responses. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Clearance was obtained from relevant authorities to ensure compliance with institutional and government research standards. These procedures upheld research integrity and ensured the protection of participants' rights.

Findings

The finding of the study indicated that, After the descriptive analysis, there followed the interview responses from three key informants, which provided deeper insights into employee experiences and perceptions regarding allowances at Njombe District Council. Thematic analysis, a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within data, was employed. This involved systematically coding the interview data, organizing these codes into themes, and interpreting them to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives.

Key informative 1 explained that

The first respondent described receiving transport and housing allowances, emphasizing that these benefits significantly reduce their financial burdens and improve their ability to focus on work tasks. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959), which suggests that such hygiene factors, including salary and allowances, prevent dissatisfaction and create a stable work environment conducive to motivation.

Key informative 2 responded that

Another participant highlighted the medical allowance as crucial, especially for managing health expenses, which leads to less absenteeism and higher productivity. This view resonates with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), where health and safety needs are fundamental for employees to achieve higher-level motivation and optimal performance.

Key informative 3 explained

A third respondent pointed out that transport allowance enables punctuality and reduces stress related to commuting, directly enhancing their commitment and efficiency. This is supported by Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), which emphasizes that employees are motivated when they expect that their efforts will lead to valued rewards, such as allowances improving their work conditions.

The findings from the interview responses revealed that allowances play a crucial role in shaping employee motivation, commitment, and overall performance at Njombe District Council. Transport, housing, and medical allowances were consistently highlighted as essential in alleviating financial burdens, reducing stress, and supporting employees' health and well-being. These benefits not only enhance job satisfaction but also improve punctuality, reduce absenteeism, and increase productivity.

The thematic analysis further showed that employees perceive allowances as vital support systems that directly influence their efficiency and focus at work. The results align with established motivational theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory, underscoring those allowances address both basic needs and motivation drivers, thereby fostering a conducive work environment.

Discussions

The Effects of Allowances on Employee Performance

Your findings where transport, housing, and medical allowances reduce financial burdens, improve punctuality and reduce health-related absence align strongly with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. According to Herzberg (1959), hygiene factors (such as pay, working conditions, allowances) may not motivate per se, but their absence causes dissatisfaction. In providing allowances that cover essential needs (transport, housing, medical), the Njombe District Council seems to mitigate such dissatisfaction, creating a more stable foundation upon which motivators (such as achievement, recognition) can work. Thus, allowances represent more than "extras" they are foundational to avoid demotivation.

The medical allowances you reported correspond to Maslow's lower levels: safety and physiological needs (Maslow, 1943). Without assurance that health needs are covered, employees may focus more on worrying about illness or costs than performing. The interview with Key Informant 2 who emphasized medical allowance importance underscores that meeting these lower-order needs permits employees to shift attention toward higher-order performance (esteem, self-actualization). In empirical studies, allowances tied to health have been associated with reduced absenteeism and better productivity (Performance Allowance studies in public sector settings) (Agustina & Indrawan, 2024).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) holds that motivation (and thus performance) is high when employees believe that their effort will lead to good performance (expectancy), that performance will be rewarded (instrumentality), and that the reward is valued (valence). In your findings, transport allowance improves commuting punctuality and reduces stress these translate directly to increased probability that effort (coming early, less stressed) leads to performance. If employees expect that allowances will reliably follow their performance or that these allowances genuinely support their work conditions, then expectancy and instrumentality are strengthened. Your respondents seem to perceive allowances as valued rewards, enhancing valence, thereby increasing performance.

Several quantitative studies show that performance allowances have a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance. For example, a study in the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of Asahan Regency found that performance allowance significantly increases employee performance with an Adjusted R^2 of ~0.477, meaning about 47.7% of the variation in performance was explained by allowance (Agustina & Indrawan, 2024). Another study at Muhammadiyah University Tangerang similarly showed a significant positive effect of performance allowance on employee performance.

The literature suggests that allowance alone is not always sufficient; its effect often works through or is moderated by other variables. In the Asahan Regency study, performance allowance had a significant effect on work motivation, and work motivation in turn had significant effect on performance; motivation also mediated the allowance–performance link. Also, work discipline has been shown to enhance the effect of allowances on performance (e.g., Lembang BBPP case). Thus, you are finding about increased efficiency when allowances reduce commuting stress/promptness supports those allowances improve not only extrinsic conditions but can trigger motivational and discipline-related pathways to better performance.

Conclusion

The study revealed that allowances play a crucial role in enhancing employee performance at Njombe District Council by addressing financial challenges, boosting punctuality, and supporting overall health and well-being. Specifically, transport, housing, and medical allowances were identified as particularly impactful in improving job satisfaction and creating a sense of security among employees. These benefits not only reduce stress related to personal expenses but also allow workers to focus more effectively on their professional responsibilities, thereby strengthening efficiency and organizational commitment.

Furthermore, the findings align with key motivational theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which emphasize the importance of incentives in driving motivation and productivity. Allowances, therefore, act as vital support systems that go beyond financial relief, fostering loyalty and long-term stability within the workforce. By ensuring that employees' essential needs are met, Njombe District Council can build a more motivated, efficient, and committed team, ultimately contributing to improved service delivery and organizational success.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the Council should ensure that allowance policies are equitably structured, consistently provided, and periodically reviewed to meet employees' evolving needs. In addition, management should integrate allowances with broader motivational strategies, such as recognition programs, training opportunities, and performance feedback, to maximize their effect on productivity. Regular monitoring and evaluation of allowance effectiveness through absenteeism rates, punctuality records, and performance appraisals will help identify gaps and guide adjustments. Strengthening allowance schemes alongside supportive organizational practices will ultimately enhance both employee well-being and overall institutional performance.

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