



**INFLUENCE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PRACTICES ON
EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN THE COUNTY
GOVERNMENT OF MANDERA, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: To assess the influence of performance evaluation practices on employees' performance in the County Government of Mandera, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem: Performance evaluation, as a governance practice, plays an important role in realization of organizational objectives. However, in Mandera County, this is not the case due to the fact that employees' performance is yet to be fully realized.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-methods approach with concurrent triangulation, targeting 1,395 employees in Mandera County, and sampled 310 respondents using Yamane's Formula. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, then analyzed thematically for qualitative insights and through descriptive and inferential statistics (linear regression) using SPSS.

Findings: The study found that employees in Mandera County often struggle with productivity, miss deadlines, and face complaints of service delays, reflecting unmet performance potential. While the county government engages in reward practices, job analysis, and pay increments, these measures are applied minimally. Frequent lack of staff rewards, job analysis, and pay adjustments limit efforts to enhance employee performance. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that performance evaluation practices are essential yet underutilized tools for enhancing employee productivity and organizational effectiveness within the County Government of Mandera.

Recommendations: The County Government should conduct job analysis and evaluation in order to place right employees for the right jobs and ensure that no employee has too much workload which might compromise efficiency and productivity.

Keywords: *Performance evaluation practices, employees' performance, county government of Mandera.*

INTRODUCTION

Governance encompasses the processes, systems, practices, and both formal and informal rules that shape institutions. It involves how these rules and regulations are applied, the relationships they create, and the quality of these relationships. Fundamentally, governance highlights leadership's role within an institutional framework. According to Bardhan and Mookherjee (2012), governance practices often include the performance evaluation of staff roles and responsibilities. Performance evaluation is a key strategy in personnel management, designed to assess an employee's current job performance, helping identify strengths and weaknesses and providing opportunities for improvement. Nykodym, Simonett, and Welling (2013) suggest that performance evaluations support employees in enhancing their performance and offer a basis for rewards or penalties aligned with individual contributions to corporate goals. Evaluations can motivate higher performance, identify training and development needs, aid succession planning, validate the hiring process, and encourage supervisors to better understand their team.

In a Netherlands-based study, Hackman and Oldham (2010) found that performance evaluations serve as a structured method to measure individual contributions toward corporate goals. They emphasize the need for maturity, fairness, and objectivity in evaluating job performance based on specific, job-related criteria. Evaluation results often reveal employees' strengths, weaknesses, training needs, and opportunities for advancement, such as promotions, pay raises, and performance improvement plans. Miller and Monge (2014) explored this topic further in a study of 13 flower firms in Mexico, concluding that performance evaluations can impact organizations and employee performance positively or negatively. When evaluations are conducted effectively, decisions on promotions, terminations, training, and merit pay increases can significantly enhance employee performance. Similarly, Campion and Thayer (2011) observed in Colombia that employees who receive high evaluation scores are typically motivated to maintain their performance, especially if feedback is coupled with salary increments, fostering a sense of worth and value.

In African organizations, Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto, and King (2015) noted a variety of performance evaluation practices tailored to each company's values and goals. Evaluations often use checklists or rating systems focused on particular skills and qualities, helping businesses address employee issues and ensuring fair compensation.

Ultimately, performance evaluations are a powerful tool for enhancing employee productivity.

In Tanzania, the essence of performance evaluation in most organizations is to checkmate the contribution made by every employee and to know how well they are going on with their task (Greasley et al, 2015). In most companies in Morogoro, Tanzania, Greasley et al (2015) report that performance evaluation is a way of providing review and evaluation of an individual job performance has its own negative and positive effect on the employee's productivity in an organization. Greasley et al (2015) report that companies where employees were constantly appraised, they felt motivated and thus improved their efficiency, reduced absenteeism and witnessed enhanced productivity. This means that when the goals of the employee are clarified, his or her performance challenges identified, the effect is to motivate the employee to achieve those goals. In other words, creating a comprehensive plan for employee development and giving an employee achievement to strive for, inspires a higher level of efficiency.

In most firms in Kenya, evaluation helps to identify the skilled and performing employee of an organization to increase their salary and other benefits that can make them satisfied on their job (Muchiri, 2011). However, there are lots of problems associated with effective performance evaluation which includes untrained supervisors/managers, lack of effective metrics, inconsistent rating of employees, unreliable reward systems. For instance, in a study conducted in Kisumu Municipality among middle cadre employees, Wafula (2014) revealed that performance evaluation policy is rarely regarded as a critical factor in an organization in enhancing the performance of the employee. Wafula (2014) noted that most employees whose performance is under review often become defensive. Whenever employee performance is rated as less than the best or as less than the level at which employee personally perceives his/her contribution, the manager is viewed as being biased. Disagreement about the contribution and performance ratings can create a conflict-ridden situation that festers for months (Nzuve, 2010).

Mandera County Government is not quite different. Nzuve (2010) reports that the County Government of Mandera uses performance evaluations to measure the performance of employees and to determine salary and wage increases. Nevertheless, performance evaluation also brings news that causes fear over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and possible bias or unfair ratings. It also shows the strength and weaknesses of employee on their job. A report by Nzuve (2010) revealed that performance evaluation

adopted by the County Government of Mandera has served to improve employee performance.

However, Nzuve (2010) as did other empirical studies failed to articulate how different performance evaluation practices interplay to influence employees' performance; hence the study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Performance evaluation, as a governance practice, plays an important role in realization of organizational objectives. However, in Mandera County, this is not the case due to the fact that employees' performance is yet to be fully realized. As stated in the background, employees' productivity is low as well as service delivery (Kaburi, Omari & Sewe, 2017). A report by Mwenda (2010) on the progress of County Government of Mandera reveals that unemployment rates stand at 67.1% against the national aggregate of 46.3%, poverty levels at 71.5% with service delivery at the Mandera County Government still below expectations. Despite these statistics, few studies had interrogated how performance evaluation practices adopted by Mandera County Government influence employees' performance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To assess the status of employees' performance in the County Government of Mandera.
- ii. To examine the influence of performance evaluation practices on employees' performance in the County Government of Mandera.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded in the good governance theory (Gisselquist, 2012) and the production function theory (Hanushek, 2000). Good governance theory emphasizes treating people as citizens with rights, emphasizing principles like accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and public participation, which are used as metrics to assess governance in Mandera County. The production function theory focuses on how organizational practices and resource allocation impact employee performance, including principles like the law of diminishing returns and the role of technological advancement. Together, these theories help assess governance quality and optimize resource use for improved employee performance in Mandera County's government.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mixed methodology and thus applied concurrent triangulation research design. The target population comprised 23 senior employees and 1372 lower-cadre employees in Mandera County totaling 1395 respondents from which a sample of 310 respondents was determined using Yamane’s Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create five strata based on the number of departments. From each department, two senior employees were selected using purposive sampling whereas 41 lower-cadre employees were selected using simple random sampling. This sampling procedure realized a sample size of 10 senior employees and 300 lower-cadre employees. Questionnaires were used to collect data from lower-cadre employees whereas interviews were used to collect data from senior employees. Data analysis began by identifying common themes. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using linear regression analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25) and presented using tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

RESPONSE RATES

In this study, 300 questionnaires were administered to lower-cadre employees and, in return, 280 questionnaires were filled. At the same time, the researcher interviewed eight senior employees. This yielded response rates shown in Table 3;

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Senior employees	10	8	80.0
Lower-cadre employees	300	280	93.3
Total	310	288	92.9

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 1 shows that lower-cadre employees registered a response rate of 93.3% whereas senior employees registered a response rate of 80.0%. This yielded an average response rate of 92.9%. This confirmed the findings of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above

75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

Status of Employees' Performance in Mandera County

The study sought to assess the extent to which employees' performance has been realized in Mandera County. Descriptive data were collected from lower-cadre employees and results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Views of Lower-cadre Employees on their Performance

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Employees are not always productive at their work places	75.0	11.5	4.5	7.5	1.5
Employees rarely meet their daily deadlines, inefficient and people often complain of delays in service delivery	65.0	10.5	3.0	11.5	10.0
Employees do not complete their duties and tasks in time	75.0	10.5	2.5	9.0	3.5
Employees do not take few hours to undertake their tasks and duties	88.5	2.5	1.5	4.5	3.0

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2 reveals that majority (75.0%) of the lower-cadre employees strongly agreed with the view that employees are not always productive at their work places as did 11.5% who agreed. However, only a paltry 4.5% were undecided, 7.5% disagreed whereas 1.5% strongly disagreed. During the interviews, the senior employees expressed similar views that productivity among employees is low. On further probing, Senior Employee, SE1, noted;

In my department, despite their hard work, employees still register low output compared to what is expected of them.

The study revealed significant concerns regarding employee productivity in Mandera County. A majority of lower-cadre employees (65%) strongly agreed that employees seldom meet daily deadlines, often work inefficiently, and face frequent complaints about delayed service delivery, with an additional 10.5% agreeing. Only 3% remained undecided, while 11.5% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. These findings were further reinforced by insights from senior employees during interviews, who noted

persistent issues with staff discipline and a consistent failure to complete tasks on time. Additionally, 75% of lower-cadre employees strongly supported the view that tasks and duties are not completed promptly, with another 10.5% in agreement.

A minimal 2.5% were undecided, while 9% disagreed, and 3.5% strongly disagreed. Further underscoring these inefficiencies, 88.5% of employees strongly agreed that tasks tend to take far longer than expected, with only a small percentage showing dissent. Senior employees confirmed these trends, describing ongoing disciplinary issues and staff consistently failing to meet performance standards and deadlines. These findings contrast sharply with Bebchuk and Hamdani's (2012) assertion that effective employee performance contributes to long-term societal and environmental stability by addressing current needs without compromising future resources. Instead, the study indicates that employee performance in Mandera County remains far from this ideal, plagued by inefficiencies and low productivity levels. These patterns highlight an ongoing challenge for local governance, where achieving meaningful productivity improvements and accountability in public service remains critical for both immediate operational effectiveness and sustainable development in the county.

Performance Evaluation Practices and Employees' Performance

The study also sought to examine the extent to which performance evaluation practices adopted by Mandera County influence employees' performance. Descriptive data were collected from lower-cadre employees, organized into specific thoughts and results are shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Views of Lower-cadre Employees on the Influence of Performance Evaluation Practices on Employees’ Performance

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Staff in the county government are rarely rewarded as a way of motivating them to realize employees’ performance	78.0	11.0	2.5	5.5	3.0
Job analysis is often carried out by the county government, though has not been effective in realizing the employees’ performance goals	69.5	25.5	1.5	2.0	1.5
County Government has often conducted evaluation on employees’ ability to meet targets to improve efficiency and productivity as a way of realizing employees’ performance	74.5	19.5	1.5	3.2	1.3
Mandera county government rarely effect any pay increment as a way of motivating me to increase employees’ productivity and efficiency as indicators of employees’ performance	76.5	10.5	3.0	7.0	4.0

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 3 shows that a majority (78%) of lower-cadre employees strongly agreed that the county government rarely rewards staff as motivation for performance, with 11% agreeing and only 5.5% disagreeing. However, senior employees contradicted this view during interviews, stating that promotions are granted annually based on merit and performance. This discrepancy highlights the complexity and sensitivity of staff promotions as a performance incentive. The findings align with Campion and Thayer’s (2011) study in Colombia, which found that positive evaluations, especially when accompanied by salary increases, enhance employees’ sense of worth and motivate sustained high performance.

The study revealed that a fair majority (69.5%) of the lower-cadre employees strongly agreed with the view that job analysis is often carried out by the county government, though has not been effective in realizing the employees’ performance goals. Slightly more than a quarter (25.5%) of the Lower-cadre employees agreed. However, 1.5% were undecided, 2.0% disagreed whereas 1.5% strongly disagreed. In the same token, senior employees also concurred that job analysis is often done as a way of improving employees’ productivity. The study also revealed that majority (74.5%) of the Lower-cadre employees strongly agreed with the view that Mandera County Government has often conducted evaluation on employees’ ability to meet targets to improve efficiency and productivity as

a way of realizing employees' performance. On the same breath, 19.5% agreed. However, 1.5% were undecided, 3.2% disagreed whereas 1.3% strongly disagreed. Similar views were expressed by senior employees who also responded in favor of the view that evaluation of employees' ability to meet job targets is often undertaken as a strategy of improving their productivity.

The study's findings align with Greasley et al. (2015), who noted in Tanzania that performance evaluations can have both positive and negative effects on employee productivity. In organizations where employees are regularly appraised, they feel motivated, which improves efficiency, reduces absenteeism, and enhances productivity. The study showed that a significant majority (76.5%) of lower-cadre employees in Mandera County strongly agreed that the county government rarely implements pay increases to motivate productivity, with only a small portion disagreeing. Interviews with senior employees revealed that this lack of pay increments is mainly due to financial constraints and strict budget allocations from the national government, though there is a desire to offer better remuneration. These findings support Muchiri (2011), who emphasized that pay increases and benefits can boost job satisfaction and performance, affirming that evaluation strategies tied to rewards can effectively motivate employees to perform better.

Inferential Analysis

To further verify the influence of performance evaluation practices on employees' performance, data were collected on the number of times Mandera County Government conducts performance evaluation and the number of new employees who meet their work deadlines for the last five years (2019-2023). Results are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Results of Frequency of Annual Performance Evaluation and Number of Employees who Meet their work Deadlines

Frequency of Performance Evaluation	Number of Employees who Meet their Work Deadlines
1	195
2	123
3	103
4	87
6	99

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 4 indicates frequency with which the county government does performance evaluation of its employees has improved employees' performance through timely service delivery. This implies that the more the performance evaluation is conducted among employees, the higher the employment rates. The results in Table 14 were subjected to linear regression analysis which generated as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Linear Regression Analysis Showing Relationship Between Performance Evaluation Practices and Employees' Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	1369.919	173.550		7.894	.004
Frequency of Performance Evaluation	185.838	47.768	.914	3.890	.030

a. Dependent Variable: Employees who Meet their Work Deadlines

From Table 5, the linear regression equation generated was; **Number of Employees who Meet Work Deadlines = 1369.919 + 0.914Frequency of Performance Evaluation.** These results from the linear regression equation indicates that the coefficient for the frequency of performance evaluation is 0.914. This implies that for every additional increase in the number of times performance evaluation is conducted, the number of employees who meet their work deadlines is expected to increase by a factor of 0.914. The value 1369.919 indicates that, besides conducting performance evaluation or job analysis, county government need to employ staff with qualifications designed for specific jobs such that analysis of their performance practices acts as other determinants of their productivity which enhances employees' performance. Table 5 further shows that the p-value, 0.030 is less than 0.05, that is, a low p-value ($0.030 < 0.05$). Thus, there is significant relationship between performance valuation practices adopted by county governments and employees' performance. Thus, in organizations where employees are constantly appraised, they feel motivated and thus improve their efficiency, reduced absenteeism and witnessed enhanced productivity. When goals of the employee are clarified, his or her performance challenges identified, the effect is to motivate the employee to achieve those goals, which, in essence, enhances employee development, increases productivity and employees' performance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the study findings, employees are not always productive at their work places, rarely meet their daily deadlines, inefficient and people often complain of delays in service delivery characterized with high unemployment rates. This indicates employees' performance is yet to be fully realized. The study also established that Mandera County Government engages in rewarding of staff, job analysis and pay increment, though to a limited extent. The county government rarely rewards staff, rarely conducts job analysis nor does it affect pay increment for employees as a practice for realizing employees' performance.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that performance evaluation practices are essential yet underutilized tools for enhancing employee productivity and organizational effectiveness within the County Government of Mandera. While existing practices like job analysis, reward systems, and employee appraisals are in place, they are infrequently applied, which limits their potential impact on employee motivation and performance. The findings underscore that low productivity, missed deadlines, and inefficiencies in service delivery are persistent issues. The study further highlights that regular, fair, and strategically implemented performance evaluations, alongside appropriate job placement and workload management, can foster a more motivated workforce and improve overall service delivery. Addressing these gaps, alongside mitigating financial constraints that hinder salary increments and rewards, could enhance employee performance and contribute to sustainable governance in Mandera County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the County Government should conduct job analysis and evaluation in order to place right employees for the right jobs and ensure that no employee has too much workload which might compromise efficiency and productivity.

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