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EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES WITHIN MOUNT KENYA REGION

[1]Peter Sichangi Wekesa, MBA [2] Dr. Kubaison Thiaine, PhD [3] Dr. Elijah Walubuka, PhD

[1]Student, Meru University of Science and Technology

[2,3]Lecturer, Meru University of Science and Technology

*E-mail of corresponding author: sichangi.peter@gmail.com

Abstract

The goal of this study was to determine the effect of employee attitudes on the implementation of performance appraisal systems in public Universities within Mount Kenya Region. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population of this study was the staff, human resource officers, administrators and finance officers in the seven (7) chartered public universities as they are considered as the ones directly involved in the implementation of performance appraisal systems. The target population for this study consisted of 2423 respondents from which a sample size was drawn. The sample size was 136 respondents from the 7 chartered public universities in Mount Kenya Region. Stratified random sampling was used in this study. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study. Quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics using SPSS (Version 20) and figures and tables were used to present the results. The study found that employee attitude and training had a positive and significant effect on the implementation of performance appraisals in public Universities in Mount Kenya Region. The study therefore recommends that universities should create awareness about the PAS to all the employees, before its introduction. This is very crucial for a successful adaption and for further efficiency of the system. Universities must increase the awareness of the employees about its goals, targets and strategies. This will make it easier and smoother to introduce PAS and afterwards the system itself will help to increase this awareness. The best organizations create performance appraisal systems that fully support their goals and link the system with their mission and vision, with their organizational strategy and with their values

Keywords: *employee attitudes, implementation of performance appraisal, public university*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Performance appraisal system is an important tool for ensuring effectiveness and efficiency for any organization. This helps in acquiring feedback to any process undertaken within the organization and to allow any improvements if necessary and for any action undertaken. Therefore, it's relevant and important for performance appraisal system to be incorporated in organizations before employees perform and managers deliver their feedback (Idowu, 2017)

In UK, education has been one of the major parts of the economy and thus the numbers of universities are increasing year by year in that country. Most of these universities have therefore started to implement the performance appraisal system so as to boost their competitiveness. The introduction of training programs has enhanced the effectiveness of PAS in the universities. The performance appraisal process has therefore been termed to be significant in the higher education quarter since it beautifies the productivity and job satisfaction of the educational body of workers. Moreover, performance appraisal is diagnosed as now not the most effective tool in reality to evaluate the personnel, but to pinpoint capacity avenues for employee improvement via schooling and other techniques (Dasanayaka, Abeykoon, Ranaweera & Koswatte, 2021).

In the United States, using overall performance appraisals started out across the Nineteen Forties where most public firms adopted the practice. In the 1960' only 10% of the public institutions were not using performance appraisal systems. Singapore private and public universities have endorsed the use of performance appraisal systems. The PAS systems have also been closely monitored by experts and this has enhanced their effectiveness. This has therefore enhanced the performance of the institutions (Mnyoty, 2019).

In Africa, most public universities performance management systems have not yet fulfilled their goals and objectives. In South Africa, the institutions of higher learning the performance management systems have not been effective. The systems are full of so many short comings. Most of the employees of the public universities have complained of the performance management systems being hard to conceptualize (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). Introduction of training programs as well as improvement of organizational structures to accommodate PAS systems would therefore enhance their effectiveness.

In Nigeria, most institution of higher learning appraises their staffs annually. The university tutors receive their performance appraisals annually. There are also self-assessment forms that help in the compensation and promotion of the employees in the institutions (Okafor, 2015). The forms are filled by the employees and later sent to the departmental heads. Training and mentorship programs have also been introduced in most universities so as to enhance the performance of appraisal systems (Igbojekwe, Ugo-Okoro & Agbonye, 2015).

In Kenya, in the year 1989, the concept of performance appraisal system was introduced. However, lack of political good will has hindered the implementation of the performance appraisal systems in the public institutions. However, a new appraisal system was introduced by President Mwai Kibaki in the year 2003. This method was introduced and endorsed by most public learning institutions. The public institutions have therefore gone further to enhance training and monitoring and evaluation practices so as to enhance performance appraisal systems (Ogindi, 2020).

In an effort by public universities to improve the performance of lecturers and tutors in Kenya, universities and other technical institutes are implementing annual performance appraisal. Most Public Universities have established strategic plans but most are put into paper work thus most of them have not been implemented or put into practice (Nyakeriga 2015). Majority have not implemented their strategic plans as evidenced with the aid of negative performance in structural improvement, incompetent employees, terrible administrative structures and weak human resources.

Chepkosgei and Atambo (2020) added that public universities in Kenya offer programmes that need to meet the expectation of the outside world but in reality graduates coming out of the colleges do not measure to the expectations of the job market. More so the performance appraisal systems are put in the strategic plan of the University but nobody knows whether all staff are usually conducted or inducted about the performance appraisal. Therefore, this recent research will determine the performance contracting strategic elements influencing implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public universities in Mount Kenya region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Performance appraisal system is important to any organizational work performance; it determines the organization's success or failure (Nyaoga, Magutu & Kipchumba, 2017). Therefore, universities require performance appraisal systems so as to become successful. The problem is that in most public institution of higher learning the employees are hired by the government and not by the specific institutions and thus most institutions have undermined the need of performance appraisal systems (Rwothumio, Okaka, Kambaza & Kyomukama, 2021). Public universities have also not been an exception since they are also characterized by poor performance appraisal systems.

The implementation of performance appraisal systems have not been very successful in most public universities. Despite the implementation of PAS since 2005 in the public universities, their performance is still not comparable with the private sector to enable it meet the ever changing, competitive global world as well as meeting the demands of a well-informed citizens. For example employees of JKUAT and Kenyatta Univerisity have complained of poor PAS. Most employees have no full understanding of the PAS (Ondari & Ondiba, 2019). According to African Development Bank (AFDB, 2015) the implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public sector in Kenya lagged behind the private sector in factors that the institutions attributed majorly on issues such as active unions which aggressively opposed such moves, the lack of clear policies on the implementation of such systems, the bureaucratic nature of policy and decision making in the public sector among other negating factors.

Past studies have been done on factors influencing implementation of performance appraisal systems but little is known on factors influencing implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public institutions of higher learning in Mount Kenya region. Alubbe (2015) factors influencing the implementation of the teachers' performance appraisal systems; a case of public secondary schools in Westlands constituency in Kenya. The study adopted a case study research design while the current study was descriptive in nature. Another study by Macharia (2017) on internal factors influencing successful implementation of management systems a case of National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) showed that the organization leadership styles greatly influenced

implementation of the system hence affecting service delivery to the public. The study focused on NHIF thus showing contexual gap.

Ondari and Ondiba (2019) focused on effect of appraisal system on employee performance of public universities in Kenya. The study however left out the strategic contracting strategic elements thus showing conceptual gap. The current investigation answered the question on what are the effects of performance contracting strategic elements influencing implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public Universities in Mount Kenya Region.

1.3 Study Objectives

The general goal of this study was to determine the effect of employee attitudes on the implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public Universities in Mount Kenya Region.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

Various theories have been reviewed in the past studies. The theories reviewed in this study included the Agency theory, the Goal-Setting theory and theory of Planned Behavior.

2.1.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theory of Planned Behavior was first developed by Ajzen (1991). It is one of the most widely used and well-supported social psychological (cognitive) theories for predicting human behavior. The central premise of the model is that behavioral decisions are not made spontaneously, but are the result of a reasoned process in which behavior is influenced, albeit indirectly, by attitudes, norms, and perceptions of control over the behavior (Smith et al., 2007). The TPB is an extension of an earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), which proposed that an individual's participation in a behavior (consumption of edible insects and its products or at least being involved in edible insects' value chains, in this case) could be predicted by his/her motivation to perform the behavior (that is intention). Intention is predicted by an individual's evaluation of how favorable the behavior is (that is attitudes) in addition to the individual's perceived social pressure to participate in the behavior (subjective norm, SN).

In creating the TPB, Ajzen (1991) added perceived behavioral control (PBC) to the Theory of Reasoned Action. PBC was defined as an individual's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior and was proposed as a predictor of both intention and behavior (Conner & Armitage, 1998). The TPB model, in its original formulation, proposes that attitudes (evaluation of the target behavior), subjective norms (perceived social pressure regarding performance of the behavior), and perceived behavioral control (perceived control over performance of the behavior), influence behavior primarily through their impact on behavioral intention. Hence, intention is seen as the proximal determinant of behavior.

Ajzen (1991) explained that salient beliefs are the determinants of an individual's behavior and actions. Salient beliefs can be categorized as behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, or control beliefs. Behavioral beliefs are predictors of attitudes, normative beliefs of subjective norms, and

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control beliefs of perceived behavioral control. In order for beliefs to be predictive, they must be salient. Salience varies between individuals and also can vary based on situations that are present in an individual's life.

However, this theory has been criticized for the reason that the reasoned action may represent only one mode of operation, the controlled or deliberate mode. In addition, with repeated performance behavior becomes a routine and no longer requires much conscious control for its execution.

The theory therefore informs the employee attitudes variable in this study. The theory showed that the behavior of employees is influenced by attitudes. In this case how well the employees will implement the performance appraisal systems will be determined by the attitudes of the employees towards the system.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

In Ethiopia Anjul (2017) made a special focus on employees' attitude and their effect on performance appraisal practices. The investigation specifically focused on standard settings, employee feedback and appraisal procedures and their effect on performance appraisal. The investigation was descriptive. From the investigation outcome, employee personal characteristics had major impact on performance appraisal implementation. The study was done in Ethiopia while the current study was done in Kenya.

Idowu (2019) did a study on workers' attitudes on performance appraisal systems and how they affect performance in United Kingdom. Workers attitudes were investigated as moderating variable. The investigation was a case study and content analysis was used. The investigation indicated that workers' attitude had a moderating effect on performance appraisal systems and performance. The study focused on only one strategic element that affect implementation of PAS while the current study focused on four elements that affect implementation of PAS.

Dube (2014) did a study on attitudes of the employees and the effect on performance management system in an engineering firm at Kantey & Templer Consulting Engineers (Pty) Ltd. The investigation was descriptive and quantitative. The investigation found that performance appraisal systems were not fully implemented in the engineering firms. The firms that they were implemented, had not been done fully and it was inconsistent. Lack of managers involvement in the implementation process was the major cause of delay in the implementation process of the performance management systems. The study focused on engineering firms while the current study focused on public universities in Mount Kenya.

Okoth and Rotich (2016) did a study on employee attitudes effect on human resource performance appraisal process in United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya. The investigation was descriptive and adopted a survey research design. The investigation was descriptive and used queries. The attitudes of employees were found to have a significant impact on performance appraisal process.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a strategy that shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in a study (Adams, Brenner & Smith, 2013). The independent variable in this study was employee attitudes whereas the dependent variable was implementation of performance appraisal system. The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.

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Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

Employee Attitudes
• Communication capabilities • Clear and unbiased • Appraisal Systems

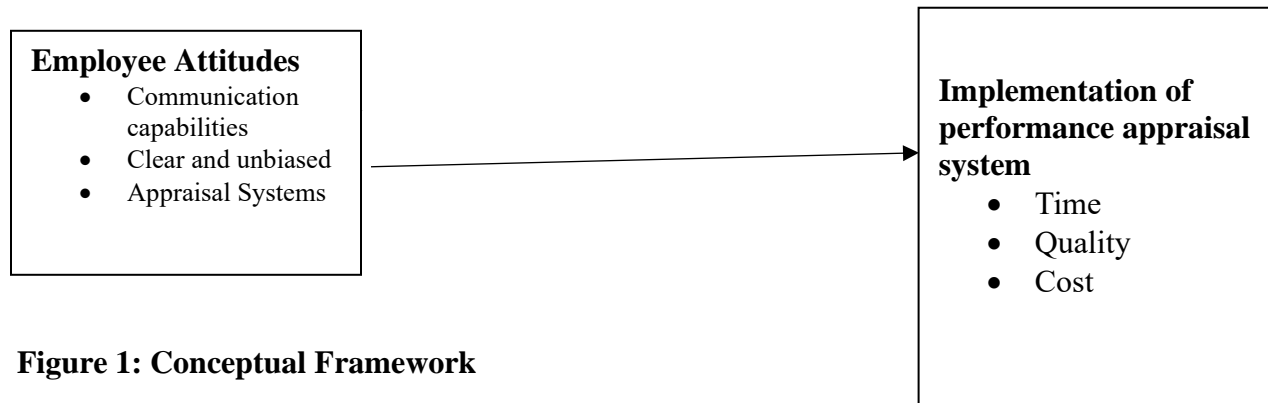| Implementation of performance appraisal system |
| --- |
| • Time
• Quality
• Cost |

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Wekesa (2021)

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Mount Kenya Region has 7 chartered public universities which are Meru University of Science and Technology, Murang'a university, Kirinyaga University, Karatina University, Chuka Univeristies, University of Embu and Dedan Kimathi University of Science and Technology. The target population of this study was the staff, human resource officers, administrators and finance officers in the 7 chartered public universities as they are considered as the ones directly involved in the implementation of performance appraisal systems. The target population for this study consisted of 2423 respondents from which a sample size was drawn. The sample size was 136 respondents from the 7 chartered public universities in Mount Kenya Region. Stratified random sampling was used in this study. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study. The questionnaires were delivered to the respondents by the researcher and with the help of research assistants. First, the questionnaires were edited to ensure consistency, accuracy and completeness. Quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics using SPSS (Version 20) and figures and tables were used to present the results. Both correlation and regression was used to show the association between the variables.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Results

4.1.1 Employee Attitude

The objective of the study was to determine how employee attitudes influences implementation of performance appraisal systems in the public Universities in Mount Kenya Region. Descriptive for monitoring and evaluation were presented in Table 1 below.

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Table 1: Employee Attitude

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.Dev
The performance appraisal process results is a clear and unbiased appraisal	11.20%	11.20%	11.20%	24.30%	42.10%	3.75	1.39
The performance appraisal process results in better communication between the employee and the supervisor	14.00%	10.30%	14.00%	25.20%	36.40%	3.60	1.43
The supervisor utilizes the evaluation system to assess the performance objectively and without bias	10.30%	7.50%	10.30%	36.40%	35.50%	3.79	1.29
When employee have problems with the performance evaluation they can communicate the concerns openly to the supervisor	10.30%	12.10%	5.60%	26.20%	45.80%	3.85	1.39
I accept the goals I have been assigned	9.30%	6.50%	14.00%	29.00%	41.10%	3.86	1.28

The results showed that majority of the respondents who were 66.4% agreed with the statement that the performance appraisal process results in a clear and unbiased appraisal (mean = 3.75, Std. Dev=1.39). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that most of the public universities had a clear performance appraisal programs. Results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 61.6% agreed with the statement that performance appraisal process results in better communication between the employee and the supervisor (mean = 3.60, Std. Dev=1.43). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that performance appraisal process enhances effective communication in a firm. These findings agreed with Idowu (2019) who indicated that workers attitude had a significant effect on performance appraisal systems and performance.

Further results showed that majority of the respondents who were 71.9% agreed with the statement that the supervisor utilizes the evaluation system to assess the performance objectively and without bias (mean = 3.79, Std. Dev=1.29). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implies that use of evaluation system enhances equity amongst employees which further promotes effective implementation of PAS. Results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 72.0% agreed with the statement that when the employee have problems with the performance evaluation they can communicate the concerns openly to the supervisor (mean = 3.85, Std. Dev=1.39). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implies that most universities have a transparent evaluation program. Further results showed that majority of the respondents who were 70.1% agreed with the statement that they accept the goals they have been assigned (mean = 3.86, Std. Dev=1.28). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implies that most university employees have the right attitude in their work.

These findings agreed with Okoth and Rotich (2016) who found that attitudes of employees had a significant impact on performance appraisal process.

The respondents were further asked to indicate how else employee attitudes influenced implementation of performance appraisal systems in their organization. The respondents indicated that the employee positive attitudes towards PAS enhanced effectiveness of PAS implementation. These findings agreed with Idowu (2019) who indicated that workers' attitude had a significant effect on performance appraisal systems and performance.

4.1.2 Implementation of Performance Appraisal Systems

The dependent variable was implementation of performance appraisal systems. Descriptive results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation of Performance Appraisal Systems

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.Dev
PAS are implemented within the approved cost	15.00%	10.30%	6.50%	37.40%	30.80%	3.59	1.41
The management is able to give useful feedback to the employees concerning PAS	15.90%	9.30%	4.70%	44.90%	25.20%	3.54	1.38
PAS executed conform to specifications	14.00%	5.60%	15.00%	41.10%	24.30%	3.56	1.30
PAS are implemented within the set time	8.40%	10.30%	23.40%	31.80%	26.20%	3.57	1.22

Results showed that majority of the respondents who were 68.2% agreed with the statement that PAS are implemented within the approved cost (mean = 3.59, Std. Dev=1.42). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that in universities that had implemented the PAS had implemented it within the cost. The study findings agreed with Kaupa and Atiku (2020) who indicated that the PAS that had been implemented in the public sector had been implemented within the cost. Further results showed that majority of the respondents who were 70.1% agreed with the statement that the management is able to give useful feedback to the employees concerning PAS (mean = 3.54, Std. Dev=1.38). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that the implementation process of PAS in most universities was effective. The study findings agreed with Idowu (2019) who indicated that performance appraisal systems that had been implemented in institutions were effective.

Results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 65.4% agreed with the statement that PAS conforms to specifications (mean = 3.56, Std. Dev=1.30). The standard deviation was

above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that most PAS that had been implemented in the public universities conformed to the university conformations. Further results showed that majority of the respondents who were 58.0% agreed with the statement that the PAS are implemented within the set time (mean = 3.57, Std. Dev=1.22). The standard deviation was above 1 thus showing that the answers were varied from the mean. This implied that slightly more than half of the public universities in mount Kenya region had effectively implemented the PAS on time. Farndale and Kelliher (2013) who indicated that the institutions that had implemented PAS had done it within the planned time.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis contained both the correlation and the regression results.

4.2.1 Correlation Results

Correlation analysis was conducted to quantify the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient (r) which ranges between -1 and +1 and quantifies the direction and strength of the linear relationship between the two variables was used. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Results

		Implementation	Employee attitudes
Implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Employee attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.628**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

In addition, results showed that employee attitudes had a strong positive linear association with implementation of performance appraisal systems (r = 0.628, p = 0.000<0.05). This implied that an improvement in employee attitudes would boost the implementation of performance appraisal systems. The study was in line with the goal setting theory that indicated that monitoring and evaluation is always conducted on projects so as to make sure that the set goals for any project are achieved. These findings agreed with Idowu (2019) who indicated that workers attitude had a significant effect on performance appraisal systems and performance.

4.2.2 Regression Results

Regression analysis was done to determine the relationship between the independent variables (organizational structure, employee attitudes, monitoring and evaluation, training) and dependent variable (implementation of performance appraisal systems).

Model Fitness results were presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628a	0.394	0.387	0.34567

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The results presented in table 4 showed that employee attitudes were found to be satisfactory variables in explaining implementation of performance appraisal systems. This means that employee attitudes explain 39.4% of the variations in the dependent variable which is implementation of performance appraisal systems. This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory.

Table 5 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA).

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.269	1	13.102	45.890	.000b
Residual	106.509	102	0.192		
Total	188.778	109			

The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant as supported by a p value of 0.000 which is lesser than the critical p value of 0.05. This was supported by an F statistic of 45.890 which imply that employee attitudes was a good predictor of implementation of performance appraisal systems.

Regression of coefficients results were presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.714	0.269		-2.655	0.009
Employee Attitudes	0.330	0.065	0.302	5.074	0.000

The results also showed that employee attitudes had a positive and significant effect with implementation of performance appraisal systems (r = 0.330, p = 0.000<0.05). This implied that an improvement in employee attitudes by one unit would lead to improvement in implementation of performance appraisal systems by 0.330 units. These findings agreed with Okoth and Rotich (2016) who found that attitudes of employees had a significant impact on performance appraisal process.

The optimal model was therefore;

Y= -0.714+ *0.330***X**

Where:

Y   =   implementation of performance appraisal systems in public institutions

X   =   employee attitudes

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that employee attitudes had a positive and significant relation with implementation of performance appraisal systems. Employee attitudes therefore helps in determining successful implementation of performance appraisal systems

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings indicated that employee attitudes helped to enhance implementation of performance appraisal systems. The study therefore recommends that universities should create awareness about the PAS to all the employees, before its introduction. This is very crucial for a successful adaption and for further efficiency of the system. Universities must increase the awareness of the employees about its goals, targets and strategies. This will make it easier and smoother to introduce PAS and afterwards the system itself will help to increase this awareness. The best organizations create performance appraisal systems that fully support their goals and link the system with their mission and vision, with their organizational strategy and with their values

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