Analysis of Performance Appraisal Systems on Employee Job Productivity in Public Universities

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ABSTRACT: *Universities appraisal system is meant to enhance the performance of employees by integrating an individual's goal with those of the organization. Despite the Universities Management having an appraisal system, performance in public universities in the country remains relatively poor. The purpose of the study was to analyze performance appraisal systems on employee job productivity in public universities. The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of self-assessment on the performance of employees in Public Universities. The research study was carried out in four universities namely Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Maseno, Moi and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. Data collection instruments used was mainly questionnaire. Both content and construct reliability was carried out through engagement of experts in preparing the questionnaire. Piloting was done in Laikipia University College, though the results were not used in the study. To ensure that the instrument is reliable, a Cronbach's Alpha of Coefficient of 0.876, was attained, which is far way above the recommended 0.7 in social sciences. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The target population consisted of 11,296 employees and 4 Registrars in charge of Administration. Purposive sampling was used to select the four universities and four registrars. Data analysis was done using the statistical Package for Social Science (Version 20). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The results were presented in form of tables, charts and cross tabulations. From the findings, self-assessment was an important section in performance appraisal as it contributed to improvement in employee job productivity. The findings will contribute to the pool of knowledge in the field of Human Resource Management and will form the basis of reference by interested parties in future. The management of public universities will use the findings of this study to guide them in performance management. Furthermore, the findings will be a source of reference for academicians who intend to carry out studies in relation to the subject of performance appraisal systems.*
Keywords: Appraisal systems, Employee job productivity, Self assessment

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The history of Performance Appraisal (PA) can be traced to Taylor's pioneering Time and Motion Studies in the early 20th century. During the First World War, appraisal concept was adopted by United States Army which was in the form of merit rating. It was man-to-man rating system for evolution of military personnel. From the army this concept entered the business field and was restricted to hourly-paid workers. During 1920 relational wage structures for hourly paid workers were adopted in industrial units and each worker used to be rated in comparison to others for determining wages rates. This system was called merit rating. The process was firmly linked to material outcomes. If an employee's performance was found to be more than the supervisor expected, a pay rise was in order (Dechev, 2010).

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

In Kenya, the appraisal system in use in the Civil Service was introduced in 2006. This was as a result of the Ministerial rationalization. The process was a government initiative whose aim was to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery through review of systems, processes and structures in the ministries and departments (Guidelines on Deepening Rationalization, 2002). One of the guidelines of rationalization was the inception of a Performance Appraisal System (PAS) which would involve participatory work planning, performance discussions and performance evaluation. This was a deliberate effort aimed at linking staff appraisal to individual work plans (Lilian, Mathooko and Sitati, 2011). The Vision 2030 goals include improved performance and quality service delivery, promotion of transformative leadership in the Government of Kenya

(GOK) and improved GOK service delivery that meets expectations of the citizens, among other clients (Kenya Vision 2030, 2008).

Performance appraisal has been described as "the process of identifying, observing, measuring, and developing human performance in organization" (Carrol & Scheider, 1982). This definition is very important, because it comprises all important components needed for the well-performed appraisal process. Identification criteria orientate the appraisal process to the determination of what has to be examined – performance related criteria and not so much performance irrelevant characteristics. The observation component means that the supervisors need to frequently observe the identified characteristics. The measurement component indicates that the superior has to translate the observations into a judgmental rating. They have to be relevant, but also must be comparable across raters in the organization. By development component, 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 also suggests that effective appraisal can improve the human performance in the organization, which also means increased employee motivation. Performance appraisal can and should be linked to performance improvement process and can also be used to identify training needs and potential, agree future objectives, support a career development and solve existing problems.

According to Ojukuku (2013), PA is that part of the performance management process in which an employee's contribution to the organization, during a specific period is assessed. As noted by Mathis and Jackson (2008), a PA system is often the link between additional pay and rewards that employees receive, and their job performance. If used effectively, PA can improve motivation and performance, but if used inappropriately, it can have disastrous effects (Fisher *et al*, 2003). For PA to be effective, it must of necessity be anchored on the performance criteria that have been outlined for the job. Riggio (2003) describes performance criteria as the means for determining successful or unsuccessful job performance. They are one of the products of a detailed job analysis. Performance criteria spell out the specific elements of a job and make it easier to develop the means of assessing levels of successful or unsuccessful job performance. It can thus be inferred that an appraisal system not hinged on this all important criteria, can neither be appropriate nor fair, particularly to the employee, whose performance is being evaluated. In fact, some key points in the arguments of those opposed to performance appraisal is that, most of the time, wrong things are rated and the wrong methods used (Deming, 1986; Gilliland and Langdon, 1998).

Situations arise whereby only some selected job elements are evaluated or given preference or higher points above other job elements in which the employee was equally engaged during the review period. This calls to question the fairness of the appraisal system and its ability to effectively produce the desired outcomes. Mickerney (1995) underscored the intricacy of PA by describing it as a difficult and complex activity which is often not performed well by many organizations. The end result of this is that it produces exactly the opposite effect to those intended.

The effect of PA on Employee Job Productivity in universities is a key pillar towards effective and efficient service delivery. PA has become the most crucial organizational life as it has many development uses. Different organizations carry out their PA differently because PA is designed to serve the organization's and employee's interest. With a good performance appraisal, employee performance is enhanced because it develops the spirit of work and boosts the morale of employees. Performance appraisal can also be used to determine the employees' level of key knowledge, skills and abilities or identify areas of personal development in line with the objectives. This is due to the fact that PA as a Human Resource Management (HRM) system is concerned with career development relying on the dialogues and discussions with the superiors and the problems in the implementation of processes being anticipated and efforts are being made to overcome them (Hasely, Blanchard and Johnson,2001). Performance Appraisal could be an effective source of management information, given to employees. Performance reviews are focused on contributions to the organizational goals. Some forms of these reviews include the question "What organizational goals were contributed to and how?" Outcomes of performance appraisal can lead to improvements in work performance and therefore overall business performance via, for example increased productivity or customer service (Dechev, 2010).

Malcolm and Jackson (2002) outline four different benefits for the organization. These are targeted training approach based on identified needs, future employee promotion decisions, effective bases for reward decisions and improved retention of employees. According to Mullins (2002), the underlying objective of PA, is to improve the performance of the individual employee, thereby leading to improvement in the performance of the organization as a whole. PA is one of the ranges of tools that can be used to manage performance effectively, in that it provides data which feeds into other elements of the performance management process.

1.3 Objective of Study

The general purpose of this study was to analyze performance appraisal systems on employee job productivity in public universities

The specific objective was to:
i.   Determine the effect of self-assessment on the employee job productivity in Public Universities.

1.4 Research Question
This paper focused on addressing the following research question:
i.   What is the effect of self-assessment on employee job productivity in public universities?

1.5 Conceptual Framework
        According to Kombo and Tromp (2009), a concept is an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances. Unlike a theory, a concept does not need discussion to be understood (Smyth, 2004). A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). A conceptual framework for the this study showed how Performance appraisal systems affect employee productivity in public universities in Kenya which was shown in Figure 1 below which conceptualizes that Performance appraisal systems   affect employee performance ascertained through Efficiency ,Effectiveness, Product Quality and Satisfaction rate.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Self-Assessment on Employee Job Productivity
        Employee's thoughts about performance are an important part of the Performance Appraisal Process. The self-assessment provides a tool for an employee to participate in the appraisal process. The purpose of the Employee Self-Assessment is to obtain his or her comments regarding job strengths, developmental needs, and actions that might be taken to improve performance. The supervisor may encourage one to complete the form with specific comments. The comments are to familiarize the supervisor with the employee's thoughts, perceptions, and expectations. The employees' comments should also provide an opening to discuss performance development including areas of needed improvement and resources available for improving those areas. It should also provide the supervisor with insight regarding things affecting the work environment, contributions you feel you have made, and suggestions for changes and improvements. The supervisor will ask one to complete the Employee Self-Assessment section prior to the appraisal interview/discussion. The Employee Self-Assessment together with the completed Performance Appraisal document and then submitted to Human Resources for processing.
        As seen earlier, in a self-evaluation, an employee responds to a series of questions that help the employee evaluate his or her performance during the evaluation period. This guides the employee through a thought process that allows him or her to focus on the many aspects and nuances of performance. The employee is prompted to think about all of the components of performance, from job description to accomplished goals and to include professional development in the mix. This self-evaluation opens up the conversation between an employee and the supervisor during the performance evaluation meeting. The act of self-evaluation and the concurrent introspection causes an employee to review goals, assess progress, and thoughtfully consider areas for job and career growth.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
        The study adopted descriptive survey design. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), descriptive survey design is a way of collecting information by interviewing or issuing questionnaires to sampled individuals. The survey design was preferred as it is used to explain the existing status of the two variables, that is, PA and Employee job productivity in selected public universities in the former Western Kenya provinces. It encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions to respondents through questionnaires or interviews (Trochim, 2000).
        This study targeted 11300 employees and four Registrars (Administration) of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Maseno University, Moi University and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. The number of public universities was selected through purposive sampling technique to obtain four public universities. The sample size of employees in each university was obtained using coefficient of variation. Nassiuma (2000) asserts that in most surveys or experiments, a coefficient of variation in the range of 21% to 30% and a standard error in the range 2% to 5% is usually acceptable. It does not assume any probability distribution and is a stable measure of variability. Therefore a coefficient variation of 21% and a standard error of 2% were used. The lower limit for coefficient of variation and standard error were selected so as to ensure low variability in the sample and minimize the degree or error. This study used the questionnaire and interview schedules for data collection. The questionnaires were self-administered because all the respondents had a high level of education and were relatively cheaper. The questionnaires were hand-delivered to the respondents by two research assistants. The questionnaires were

administered by the researcher and research assistants to avoid misinterpretation of questions by 'drop and pick' technique. This helped solve the potential problem of senior management absenteeism.

The interview schedules targeting the Registrars (Administration) contained straightforward questions on the analysis of performance appraisal systems on employee job productivity on public universities. The interview schedules were administered in person by the researcher to get firsthand information on the key concepts of the study. Interview schedules give in-depth information or insightful information on the subject of the study. Collected data was coded and analyzed using descriptive techniques. Objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in cross tabulation and frequency tables. Regression analysis was used to analyze the objective to ascertain how performance appraisal variables interact with employee job productivity. This method was then adopted since the data to be collected was categorical. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach for the responses from the interview schedules. Using the thematic approach, the information contained in the findings of the study was sorted out, classified and categorized under the themes identified. The frequency with which an idea, word or descriptions appears was interpreted as a measure of importance, attention or emphasis. Bar graphs, charts and graphs were used to present analyzed data. The findings drawn from the study guided the researcher in drawing informed conclusions and later recommendations. All statistical tests were performed using SPSS version 20 software programs commonly accepted descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency for frequency distribution, correlation, regression and standard deviation as a measure of variation were determined, as advocated by Neuman (2003) and Stephens (2004).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
4.1 Self-Assessment on Employee Job Productivity
Several questions concerning self-assessment were asked and the results were as discussed in **Table 4.1.**The number of respondents was 109. The questions were rated on the five (5) point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree. The items' mean and standard deviation measuring level of agreement were computed from the respondents' response. The overall item mean was 4.4622 and standard deviation was 0.4563. In addition, an overall standard deviation that was between 0 and 1 an indication that the respondent's view could be trusted. The mean scores of all the items was ≥ 4 and based on the Likert scale, 4= agree, this signified that the respondents were in agreement that that self-assessment was an important section in performance appraisal exercise. The variables that had the highest mean (4.8712) had the standard deviation (0.2098) was on the performance targets are set annually. This meant that most public universities set their targets annually. The variable with the lowest mean (4.0023) had the standard deviation of 0.6745. This was an indication that the respondents gave varied views on the statement "immediate supervisors carry out performance appraisals."

4.2 Correlation Results of Self-Assessment on Employee Productivity
In order to determine the significance effect of self-assessment on employee productivity, a simple regression analysis (b) was conducted to ascertain the level of significance of these variables. To test the question, mean of employee productivity (P) was correlated with mean of self-assessment (SAS). The results are shown in the Table 4.2. The correlation results between the mean of self-assessment (SAS) and the mean of employee productivity (P) had a beta term β_1=0.743 at p=0.01. However, from this results, the value of beta β_1=0.749 and yet 0.749≠0.The study therefore has established that there exist some positive effect between self-assessment and employee productivity since the value of beta, $\beta_1 \neq 0$.

This correlation results in Table 4.2 show that self-assessment account for 56.2% of employee performance (R^2=0.562) and the relationship followed a simple regression model of P= $\alpha + \beta_1$ SAS +e, where P is the employee productivity, α is the constant intercept of which in this case is 0.841 and beta β_1= 0.743, which at times is referred to as the slope coefficient, SAS is the self-assessment and ε is the standard error term ($P = 0.841 + 0.743 + e$).

V. CONCLUSIONS
The objective was to determine the whether self-assessment had any effect on employee productivity. The study therefore established that there exists some positive effect between self-assessment and employee productivity. Performance appraisal is a vital tool to measure the frameworks set by any organization to its employees as it is utilized to track individual contribution and performance against organizational goals. It also identifies individual strengths and opportunities for future improvements and assessed whether organizational goals were achieved or serves as basis for the company's future planning and development. Goal setting for employees is also a relevant aspect in self-assessment because targets keep the employees focused by making them strive to reach the targets and even surpass the targets. They give the employees a sense of belonging thereby seeing how their everyday actions improve the company, which makes them feel like they can make a

difference. Setting targets helps the supervisors discover the strengths of employees and thus utilize them appropriately. On levels of satisfaction, the findings show that majority of employees never agreed to the results of the PAS. This was because apprasees were never involved in setting up of the PAS but just given the forms to fill in.

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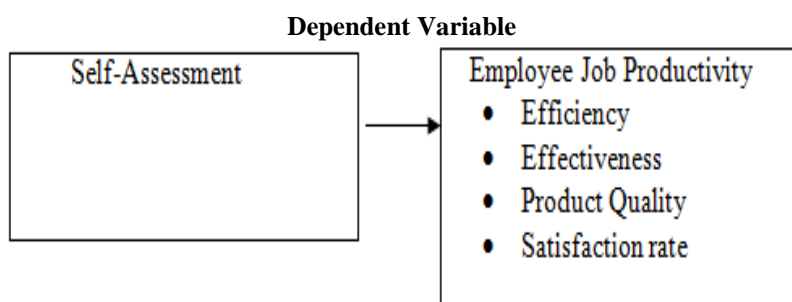**List of Figures and Tables**
Independent Variable: Self-Assessment

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 4.1: Self-Assessment on Employee Productivity

QUESTIONS	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance appraisal is done in our University annually	4.0125	0.3218
Employer carries out performance appraisal	4.3129	0.1092
Immediate supervisors carry out performance appraisals	4.0023	0.6745
Do Heads of Sections set performance targets/goals	4.5413	0.2345
I am always involved in setting of performance targets	4.6791	0.4567
Performance targets are set annually	4.8712	0.4565
It is important to set performance targets	4.6638	0.2098
I achieve set objectives	4.7129	0.7673
I evaluate my own performance	4.7123	0.5698
I am satisfied during and after assessment	4.4532	0.7664
Does carrying out a self-evaluation enhance your performance	4.1231	0.4523
TOTAL	**4.4622**	**0.4563**

Source: Research data 2015

Table 4.2: Correlation Results of Self-Assessment on Employee Productivity

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.749[a]	0.562	0.560	0.52501		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-assessment						
ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.636	1	76.636	278.037	0.000[b]
	Residual	59.812	217	0.276		
	Total	136.447	218			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-assessment						
Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	0.841	0.151		5.580	0.000
	Self-assessment	0.743	0.045	0.749	16.674	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Mean of employee productivity Level of significance=0.05						

Source: Research data 2015