

The Influence of Performance Management System on Employee Performance in Commercial Banks in Kitui Town, Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of performance management system on employee performance in banks in Kitui Town, Kenya. The population under study was 118 employees. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Data from the research was analyzed using SPSS. It was found that performance management system enhances employee performance by providing a reliable performance measure, increasing staff competency and hence realization of set targets. The research concluded that enacting performance management system enhances employee performance through setting individual objectives that are derived from overall organizational goals and identifying skills gap which are addressed through trainings thus increasing staff competence levels. The study recommended that banks management should foster their employee's awareness of the role of performance management system, reward good performers, address training gaps identified, conduct appraisals in a professional manner and give accurate feedback concerning staff's performance after performance appraisal process.

Keywords: Performance management system, employee performance, performance review process, performance appraisal system, performance outcomes

1.1 Background of the study

According to Fletcher (2001) performance management refers to an approach that involves creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the organization, helping each individual employee understand and recognize their part in contributing to them, and in so doing manage and enhance the performance of both the individual and the organization. Macky and Johnson, (2000) shares the same view but elaborates that "performance management system is a kind of completed and integrated cycle for performance management. The emphasis of performance management systems is on continuously improving organizational performance, and this is achieved through improved individual employee performance". Similarly from the suggestion of Lawler (2003), the objectives of performance management system often include motivating performance, helping individuals develop their skills, building a performance culture, determining who should be promoted, eliminating individuals who are poor performers, and helping implement business strategies. All human beings possess potential within themselves in a few or more functional areas. However, utilization and conversion of this potential into deliverable performances is often sub optimal due to a variety of reasons. Performance management acts as an agent in converting the potential into performance by removing the intermediate barriers as well as motivating the human resource". (Kandula,2006.)

The above views show the immense role played by performance management in both individual and organizational performance. The importance of Performance management in service industry firms like banking institutions can thus not be gainsaid. It is of great importance that different aspects of PMS be explored so as to further understand the means through which its benefits can be fully harnessed rather than the process be seen as just a mere exercise observed for formality purposes.

1.2 Introduction

Performance management involves managing employee efforts, based on measured performance outcomes. Therefore, determining what constitutes good performance and how the different aspects of high performance can be measured is critical to the design of an effective performance management process. And performance management effectiveness increases when there is ongoing feedback, behavior-based measures are used and preset goals and trained raters are employed (Lawler, 2003). Ducharme et al. (2005) in a large-scale Canadian workforce survey showed that performance feedback (not linked to pay) was a more important influence on pay satisfaction than performance related pay unaccompanied by feedback. The Malaysian Civil Service Guide (2006) similarly regards performance management as a continuous process which is aimed at improving individual performance through consistent feedback. Separate from performance management, in the organizational context, performance is usually defined as the extent to which an organizational member contributes to achieving the goals of the organization. Employees are a primary source of competitive advantage in service-oriented organizations (Luthans and Stajkovic, 1999). In addition, a commitment performance approach views employees as resources or assets, and values their voice. Employee performance plays an important role for organizational performance. Employee performance is originally what an employee does or does not do. Performance of employees could include: quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, presence at work, cooperativeness (Güngör, 2011). Macky and Johnson pointed out that improved individual employee performance could improve organizational performance as well. From Deadrick and Gardner's (1997) points, employee performance could be defined as the record of outcomes achieved, for each job function, during a specified period of time. If viewed in this way, performance is represented as a distribution of outcomes achieved, and performance could be measured by using a variety of parameters which describe an employee's pattern of performance over time. On the other hand, Darden and Babin (1994) said employee's performance is a rating system used in many corporations to decide the abilities and output of an employee. Good employee performance has been linked with increased consumer perception of service quality, while poor employee performance has been linked with increased customer complaints and brand switching. Based on the above sentiments employee performance can simply be said to be duties expressible in terms of quality or quantity performed by a worker in a given time frame.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Performance management system is instrumental in cascading an organization's vision, mission and objectives from the management to all employees. When done professionally it affords a meritorious assessment of employee performance that shows how they have individually contributed to the organizations overall goals. In an attempt to monitor and measure both employees and organizations performance organizations have in the recent past embraced practices like results based management, management by objectives, total quality management and balanced score card. However each of these has had a share of its shortfalls. In the service industry firms notably financial institutions failure to monitor and mitigate employee performance can encourage risky behavior that might trigger episodes like global financial crisis witnessed in 2008 or such practices that led to liquidation of several banks in Kenya in the year 2015. Thus a good performance management system that has a short cycle like quarterly basis can act as a deterrent by constantly monitoring employee performance and behaviors closely and taking remedial measures. The today's business environment has been made complex by the ever increasing global mobility, existence of virtual organizations, regular business re-engineering endeavors, emergence of a highly demanding millennial workers and the need for flexible work-life balance. This has posed an enormous challenge on performance management systems which have to be regularly revamped and tailored to capture dynamics like customer's perspective, regulators demands, shareholders views, innovations ability, financial position, monitoring of virtual employees, organizations structural changes amongst similar perspectives. And to adapt to the ever evolving business dynamics and maintain healthy and robust performance organizations need not to entirely move away from traditional performance management models but rather institute a regularly sustained improvement effort on the existing systems taking care to address challenges posed by the prevailing business environment at any given time.

1.4 Research objective

To establish the impact of performance management system on employee performance in commercial banks in Kitui town.

1.5 Research question

What is the influence of performance management system on employee performance in commercial banks in Kitui town?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Theories are formulated to explain, predict and help in understanding phenomenon and in many cases to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of the critical bounding assumptions (David, 2009). According to Njue (2011) theoretical framework is a set of assumptions about the nature of phenomena. Performance management gives direction to the employees through guidance from management (Medlin 2013). Managing organisations is about managing performance of people who work in organizations. It is believed that performance management is two-fold; firstly; organisations need to evaluate the performance of managers in achieving strategic goals and secondly, evaluate how employees through guidance from management help in achieving both organisational and individual needs. Establishment of clear links between organisational development, the delivery of quality services and the development of employees at work is important (Malaysian Civil Service Guide, 2006). Through research with five US-based organisations, Sillup et al (2010) found that all were using annual 360-degree feedback. Within each organisation, the majority of performance evaluators and employees (87%) had received training about their performance appraisal system and 85 % of evaluators helped their employees set objectives. However, only 20 % of the evaluators with greater responsibility within the organisation were seeking feedback about an employee's performance from peers, which was inconsistent with the 360 appraisal system. This was a clear manifestation that the top management was not well versed in the performance management system that they had adopted and could therefore not adequately direct staff with regard to the system.

Rees and Porter (2003) state that for a scheme to 'have any prospect of success it needs to be owned and driven by line management'. Sillup et al. (2010) state that 'many performance appraisal systems fail because organisations do not direct enough effort into gaining support for the process from those managers who will implement the system and Lewy and Du Mee (1998, cited in De Waal, 2003) argue that successful implementation and use of a performance management system will be achieved when managers have an 'intensified awareness of the importance of the performance management system' (p.694). Furthermore senior leaders should also play a role in ensuring performance management aligns corporate strategy and objectives to individuals, so that employees know how what they do fits with the organisation's overall strategy. This is known as the 'golden thread' of performance management (IDeA, 2004). Wikina (2008) adds that senior management needs to show leadership and set the tone for performance management, 'building the right culture based on efficient delivery of service, organised and multidisciplinary teamwork, and effective communication at all levels'. Wikina also states that the leadership needs to provide and allocate tools for performance management and improvement. De Waal (2003) also states that 'managers' understanding of the nature of performance management is a key behavioural factor for the successful implementation of performance management and that a positive attitude of managers towards performance management is vital'. A good alignment between managers' responsibilities and the performance management system is also considered necessary. Through a research at an electricity company, Martinez (2005) found that at a tactical level, the performance review process can become 'monotonous', which means that managers have to 'continuously refresh the way in which performance is reviewed to keep it interesting and attractive'. This meant that the leadership of managers played an important part in the success of the system. Martinez (2005) also found through a case study of a European Electricity Supplier that a benefit of implementing a performance management system was the change in employee's behavior; it encouraged a 'tolerance to failure', improved transparency of information and improved vertical and horizontal cooperation.

As a result, the culture at the company was perceived to 'move from a reactive and command-and-control culture to an open and proactive one'. Holloway et al. (1995, cited in De Waal, 2005) provide a useful summary statement that 'the successful implementation of a performance management system depends on understanding and accommodating the behavioural factors of performance management' (p.61). Although most of research has portrayed performance management in good light there are others that hold divergent views. Latham and Mann (2006) suggest that employees often believe that PMS is implemented for all the wrong reasons, by the management, that is, the management is trying to use this process as a way to hold them account and subsequently much easier to discipline them, hence the perception that it is not fair. This perceived lack of procedural fairness can have ranging negative implications for organisations. Ittner, C.D., Larcker, D.F. and Meyer, M.W. , (2003) show that linking performance measurement to rewards may result in dysfunctional behaviours, including gaming, tunnel vision, misrepresentation, neglecting tasks, and short-termism. Similarly, Buchner (2007) found that most employees have a negative feeling about performance management. Employees feel that the system manipulates employees without rewarding their efforts. Having reviewed the above literature this study is based on the following two theories:

2.1.1 Goal setting theory

This theory had been proposed by Edwin Locke in the year 1968. This theory suggests that the individual goals established by an employee play an important role in motivating him for superior performance. This is because the employees keep following their goals. If these goals are not achieved, they either improve their performance or modify the goals and make them more realistic. In case the performance improves it will result in achievement of the performance management system aims (Salaman et al, 2005).

2.1.2 Expectancy theory

This theory was proposed by Victor Vroom in 1964. This theory is based on the hypothesis that individuals adjust their behavior in the organization on the basis of anticipated satisfaction of valued goals set by them. The individuals modify their behavior in such a way which is most likely to lead them to attain these goals. This theory underlies the concept of performance management as it is believed that performance is influenced by the expectations concerning future events (Salaman et al, 2005).

2.2 Conceptual framework

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). This study focuses on the effects of performance management systems on employee performance. In this research the dependent variable was employee performance. The independent variable was performance management system. Independent variable Dependent variable

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a procedure used to gather data, analyze data, interpret results and disseminate the findings (Myers 2008). This study used descriptive survey research design to show the influence of Performance Management System on employee performance of commercial banks in Kitui County. Lavrakas (2008) describes a descriptive survey research design as a systematic research method for collecting data from a representative sample of individuals using instruments composed of closed-ended and/or open-ended questions, observations, and interviews.

3.2 Population

The population of this study was all employees of Commercial Banks in Kitui town. The researcher was interested in employees in all sections and department of the Banks since a performance management system permeates all cadres in an organization. Therefore the target population of the study consisted of staff drawn from all the eight (8) sampled Banks in Kitui town that is Kenya Commercial Bank Group Ltd, Co-operative Bank, Equity Bank, Barclays Bank, Post Bank, Sidian Bank, Family Bank and National Bank of Kenya.

3.3 Data collection instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A was for collection of information on demographic characteristics of the respondent and Section B on performance management system effect on employee performance.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

The data received was analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS). All the questionnaires received were referenced and items in the questionnaire coded to make data entry easy.

Data was also analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. Due to the fact that most of the data collected involved qualitative data content analyses was also used to analyze the data.

4.0 Research Results and Discussion

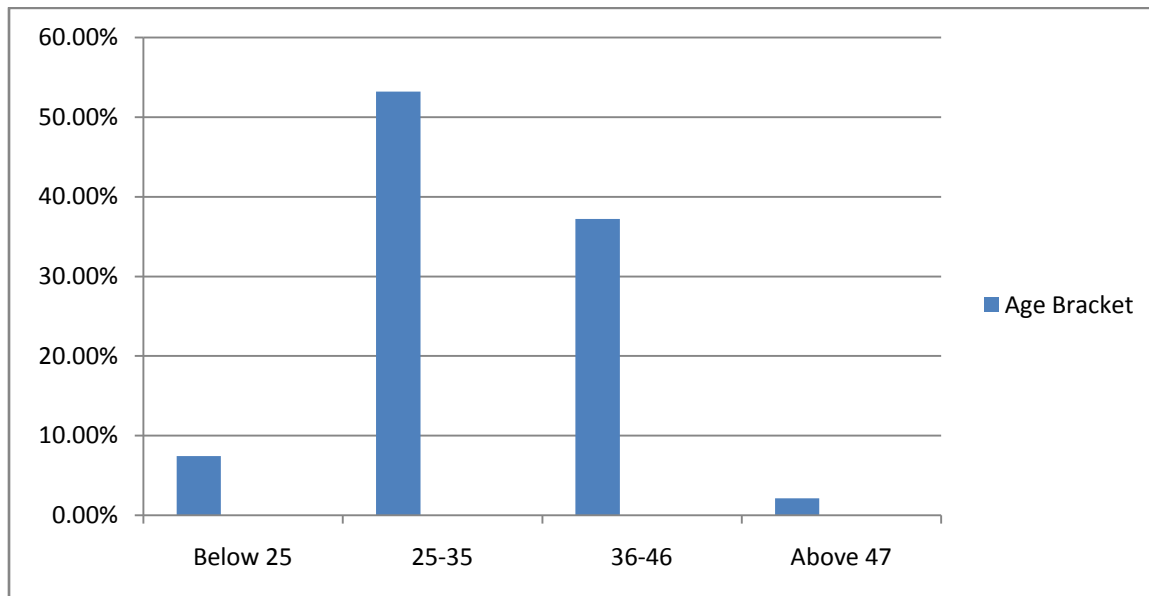
4.1. Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.1 Age Distribution of Bank Employees

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25	7	7.45
25-35	50	53.19
36-46	35	37.23
Above 47	2	2.13
Total	94	100

Table 4.1 showed that majority 50 (53.19%) of the bank employees were aged between 25-35 years followed by 35 (37.23%) aged between 36-46, then 7 (7.45%) aged below 25 years while the minority aged above 47 years were 2 (2.13%). This age brackets indicates that majority of the banks personnel surveyed were either youth or young adults that is aged between 25- 46 making up 96.4%.

Figure 4.1 Age Brackets of Employees



4.2 Ranks Distribution of Respondents

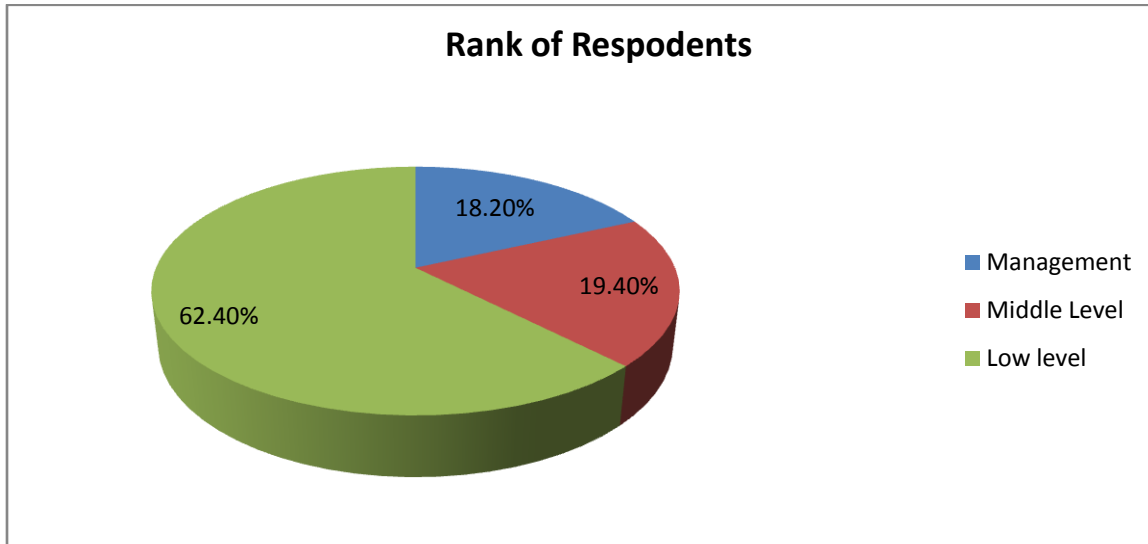
Table 4.2 Rank Distribution of Bank Employees

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Management	17	18.2
Middle Level	18	19.4
Low Level	58	62.4
Total	94	100

Data on table 4.2 reveals bank employees rank in the organizational hierarchy. It revealed that the respondents who were serving at the management level were 17 (18.2%).

This category included positions like branch managers, operations managers, and credit managers among others. The middle level was slightly higher than the management level that is 18(19.4%). This included teller supervisors, assistant operations manager, and senior credit officers among others while the lower levels were the majority 58(62.4%). This last group entailed entry level positions such as loan clerks, tellers, loan officers among others.

Figure 4.2 Ranks of Respondents



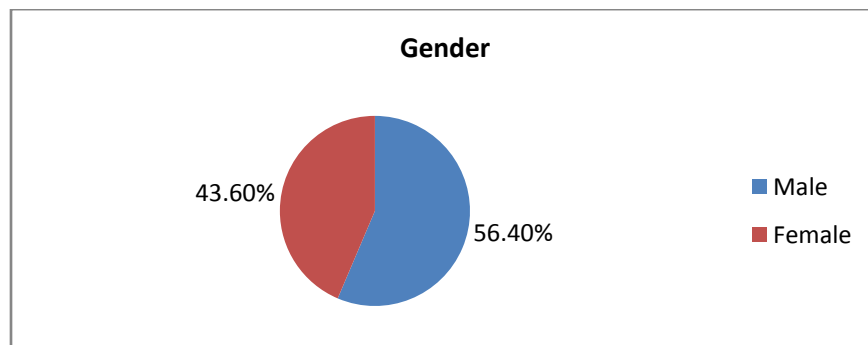
4.3 Respondent’s Distribution by Gender

Table 4.3 Respondent’s Distribution by Gender

Categories	Responses	Percentage
Male	53	56.4
Female	41	43.6
Total	94	100

Table 4.3 indicates respondent’s distribution by gender. It revealed that majority 53(56.4%) of the banks employees interviewed were male while 41(43.6%) were female in Kitui town. This shows that there was gender balance in distribution of the banks employees. The findings thus mirrors the views espoused by both genders regarding the research questions without separating responses from either gender.

Figure 4.3 Genders of the Respondents



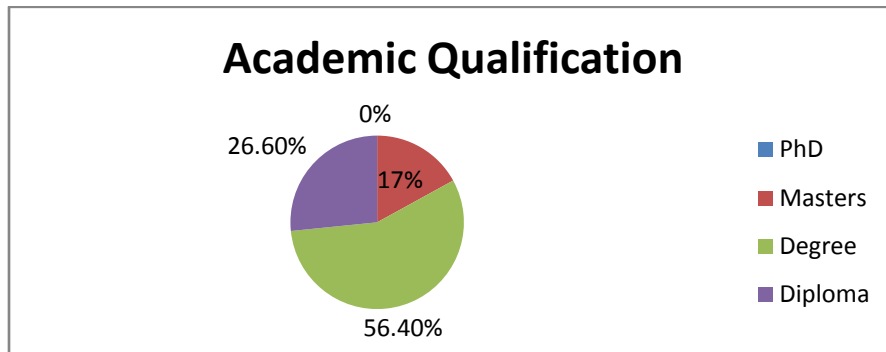
4.4 Respondents Academic Qualification

Table 4.4 Bank Employee’s Academic Qualification

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Ph.D	0	0
Masters	16	17
Degree	53	56.4
Diploma	25	26.6
Others	0	0
Total	94	100

Data on table 4.4 reveals bank employees academic qualification. It revealed that majority 53 (56.4%) of the bank employees interviewed had a bachelors degree as their highest qualification followed by Diploma holders who were 25 (26.6%) then Masters holders who were 16 (17%), and it was further revealed that none of bank employees interviewed had a Ph.D. The category representing those with other qualification too had none.

Figure 4.4 Highest Academic Qualifications of Respondents



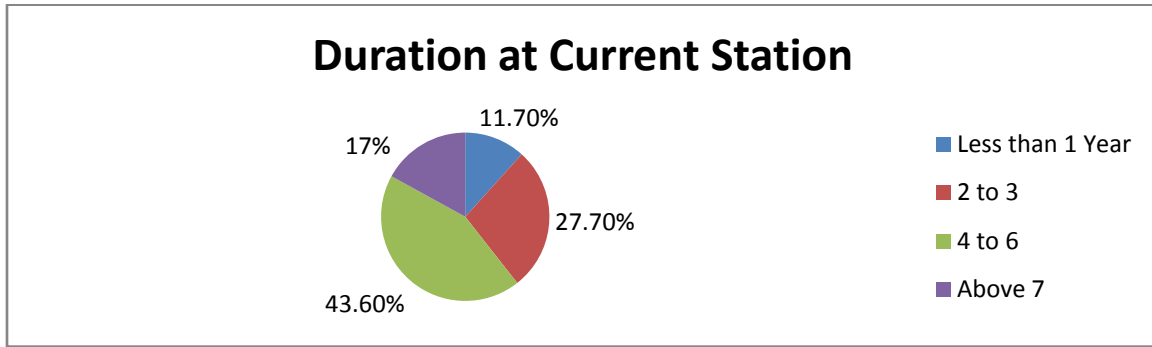
4.5 Respondents Duration at the Current Station

Table 4.5 Distribution of Durations at Current Station of Bank Employees

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 Year	11	11.7
1-3	26	27.7
4-6	41	43.6
Above 7	16	17
Total	94	100

Table 4.5 showed that majority 41(43.6%) of the bank employees had served between 4-6 years at their current station and were followed by those who had worked between 1-3 years at 26 (27.7%). Those who had served for more than 7 years were 16 (17%) while the minority had served for less than 1 year 11 (11.7%).

Figure 4.5 Durations at Current Station of Bank Employees



4.6 Discussions on the Findings

4.6.1 The effects of performance management system on employee performance

Enacting performance management system in an organization enhances performance for employees. The respondents’ views concerning the same are as summarized in table 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15.

Table 4.13 Distribution measure on conduction of performance appraisals

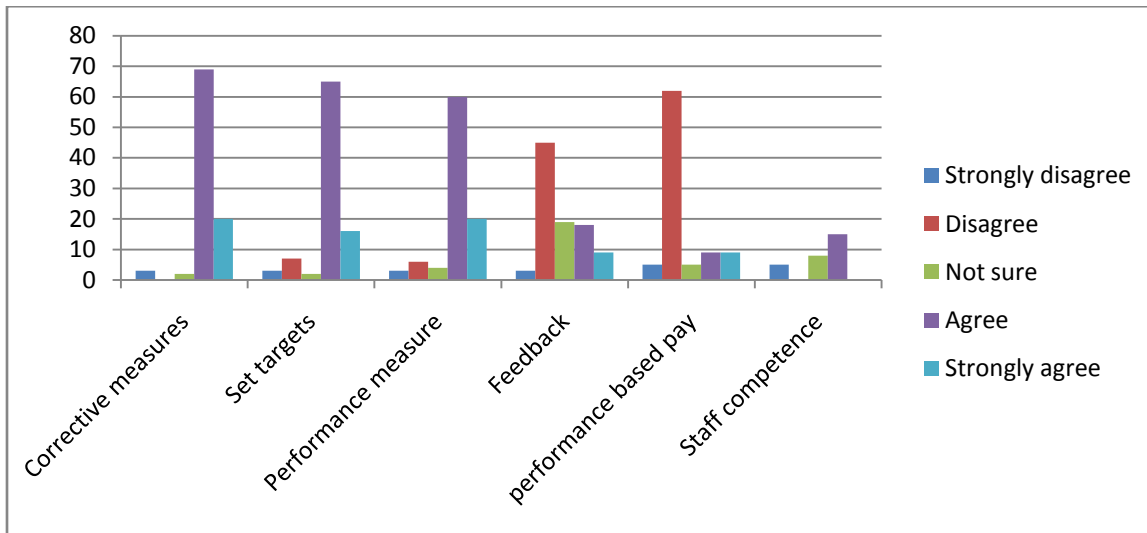
FACTOR	YES	NO
Performance appraisals are conducted	89	5

Out of 94 respondents, those who agreed that they complete a performance appraisal process were 89 (94.7%) while those who said that they don’t were 5(5.3%).

Table 4.14 Distribution Measure for Corrections, Targets, Measure, Feedback, Pay Package & Competence Improvement

FACTOR	SA (5)	A (4)	NS (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	MEAN	S/DEV
Corrective Measures	20	69	2	0	3	4.1	0.72
Set Targets	16	65	3	7	3	3.89	0.89
Performance Measure	20	60	4	6	4	3.91	0.95
Feedback	9	18	19	45	3	2.84	1
Pay Package	9	9	5	62	9	2.44	1
Competency	63	15	10	0	6	4.3	1

Figure 4.8 responses on the effects of performance management system practices on the performance of employees.



A superior frequency of respondents 69 (73.40%) agreed that corrective measures are undertaken to improve staff performance after every appraisal period followed by 20 (21.28%) who strongly agreed. Those who strongly disagreed were 3 (3.19%) while those not sure were 2 (1.06%) and none disagreed. On whether performance management system used in their organization helps employees meet their set targets those who agreed took the lion’s share at a frequency of 65 (69.89%) and those who strongly agreed were 16 (17.20%). Those who were not sure were 2 (2.15%), disagreed were 7 (7.53%) and strongly disagreed were 3 (3.23%). These findings concurs with the Expectancy theory which is based on the hypothesis that individuals adjust their behavior in the organization on the basis of anticipated satisfaction of valued goals set by them and modifies their behavior in such a way which is most likely to lead them to attain these goals. Using descriptive statistics, Homayounizadpanah and Baqerkord (2012) carried out a similar study in Iran entitled “Effect of implementing Performance Management on the Productivity, Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Chabahr Municipal Employees”. The major finding from the correlation analysis was that there was a strong positive relationship between performance management and productivity. Furthermore, the analysis also showed that performance management and efficiency have strong positive relationship. A large proportion of the survey participants 60 (64.52%) agreed coupled with 20 (21.51%) who strongly agreed that the performance appraisal process is necessary for measuring employee performance. The minority included 4 (4.30%) who were not sure, 6 (6.45%) who disagreed and finally 3 (3.23%) who strongly disagreed. A greater percentage disagreed 45 (47.87) and strongly disagreed 3 (3.19%) that staff receives specific and accurate feedback from their supervisors on their performance after every appraisal process. Those who agreed and strongly agreed were 18 (19.15%) and 9 (9.57%) respectively while those who were not sure were 19 (20.21%).

The remuneration of the employees including basic pay, commission, promotion and other benefits are not purely based on performance appraisal results. More than half of the respondents 62 (68.89%) disagreed and 5 (5.56%) strongly disagreed. The others who strongly agreed were 9 (10%), agreed were 9 (10%) while not sure were 5 (5.56%). On whether performance management system leads to employee becoming competent majority of the survey participants 63 (67.02%) strongly agreed and a further 15 (15.96%) agreed. Those who were not sure were 10 (10.63%), strongly disagreed were 6 (6.38%) and none disagreed. These findings agree with the Goal setting theory which suggests that the individual goals established by an employee play an important role in motivating him for superior performance. This is because the employees keep following their goals. If these goals are not achieved, they either improve their performance or modify the goals and make them more realistic. In case the performance improves it will result in achievement of the performance management system aims. Several studies have documented similar findings.

Rashid Saeed, Rab Nawaz Lodhi, Ahmar Naeem, A.R, Z.M, M.A (2013) undertook a study entitled “Impact of Performance Appraisals and Motivation on Employee’s Outputs in Banking Sector of Pakistan”. The study found that there was a positive relationship of work performance with performance appraisal and motivation. It also included that employees of banks of sahiwal had high work performance due to performance appraisal and high motivation. Both regression and correlation results showed positive relationship of work performance with motivation and performance appraisal. Work performance, the study added, is generated through performance appraisal and high work motivation. Michael A. Akinbowal, Melanie E. Louren & Dinesh C. Jinabha (2013) did a similar study on the role of performance appraisal policy and its effects on employee performance and they concluded that the adequate performance of employees based on performance appraisal policy will result in improvement in employee performance. Feedback, particularly on interpersonal (supervisor-subordinate) basis was found to be useful and highly effective in motivating employees to improve their performance. The study further suggested that promotion and salary increment of the employee may be greatly influenced by properly organized and executed performance appraisal policy. In addition, the study found that performance appraisal policy could improve communication and the quality of working life and make employees feel that they are valued by the organization. Armstrong & Stephens (2006) too have observed that performance management is a strategic and integrated process which delivers sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of individual contributors and teams.

Table 4.15 Distribution measure for unbiased PMS

Factor	YES	NO
Existence of unbiased PMS	37	57

Out of 94 respondents those who were of the opinion that their employer had designed a performance management system which was free from biasness and favoritism were 37 (39.4%) while those of the contrary opinion were 57(60.6%).

5.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The variation in numbers between the male and female employees in the banks in kitui town is slightly below 10%.The bulk of employees lie between the ages of 25 - 46 and a few are aged below 25 years or above 47 years. Majority of the banking personnel are well trained with those holding bachelors and masters degrees accounting for more than 73%. Many of the employees had served in the current station for a period of between 1 - 6 years forming a percentage of 71.3% while a few had served for less than 1 year or above 7 years accounting for 28.7%. In terms of the level, most of the employees were at the lower end of the spectrum forming a commanding 62.4% with both middle and management level staff holding a combined percentage of 37.6%.In a clear manifestation that enacting performance management system in an organization enhances performance for employees 87% of the study participants agreed that management system used in their organization helps employees meet their set targets. In the same vein, a large proportion of the survey participants comprising 86% agreed that the performance appraisal process is necessary for measuring employee performance and a further 83% agreed that performance management system leads to employee becoming competent. In spite of the fact that 94.7% of the respondents agreed that they do complete a performance appraisal process each year, 60.6% asserted that their employer had not designed a performance management system which was free from biasness and favoritism.

A superior frequency of respondents forming 94.7% agreed that corrective measures are undertaken to improve staff performance after every appraisal period although 51% of the participants felt that they do not receive specific and accurate feedback from their supervisors on their performance after every appraisal process. Of importance to note also was the fact that a sizable majority of respondents forming 74.5% concurred that their remuneration including basic pay, commission, promotion and other benefits are not purely based on performance appraisal results.

5.2 Conclusions

Enacting performance management system enhances employee performance. It involves setting individual objectives that are derived from overall organizational goals and allocating time frame for completion. The employees know that their performance is being monitored and will eventually be evaluated at determined periodic cycle. The results of the evaluation will have consequences. Meeting the objectives within their time frame helps employees achieve their set targets. Performance appraisal process identifies skills gap manifest in employees. Corrective measures are instituted through trainings and this normally increases staff competence levels. Performance management system though not a perfect science, it is a good measure of employee performance since rather than be arbitrary it is based on scoring criteria that identifies the factors to be measured as well as weights assigned to the factors. Quite remarkably majority of banks conduct performance appraisals. However most of staffs do not like it viewing it as biased and a system put in place for identifying a potential candidate for dismissal or any other form of punishment. Staffs do not get specific and accurate feedback after every appraisal process. The results of performance appraisals do not solely determine the pay package.

5.3 Recommendations

The banks management should strive to make their employees aware of the role of performance management system and encourage them to embrace it fully. To make the process to be seen as meaningful rewards should be given to good performers and training gaps identified be addressed through mounting relevant training programs. The appraisals should be conducted in an unbiased and a professional manner. Staff should be given specific and accurate feedback concerning their performance after every performance appraisal process. Despite the fact that performance management systems have been embraced unreservedly by the management of all banks, the uptake and appreciation of it is low amongst the low level employees and in some quarters there is outright resentment toward the whole system of performance management system. Specifically majority of low level staff regards it as biased and generally distaste it. Based on this there is need to investigate and offer suggestions on how to make it appealing to both management as well as other employees.

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