Effectiveness of job evaluation Practice on Employees Performance of Kenyan Public Universities

Elijah Walubuka[1*],Ronald K. Chepkilot[2], and Charles Zakayo[3]

[1,2]Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Commerce, Kabarak University, Kenya

[*]Corresponding Author's, Tel. +254 722266263

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to establish the effectiveness of employee's evaluation process on employees' performance of Kenyan Public Universities. The study adopted a descriptive case study research design. The target population for this study comprised 1,620 Heads of departments and 23 Heads of Human Resource Departments totaling to 1,643. The study used simple random sampling technique to pick heads of department and purposive sampling for Human Resource Officers in-charge owing to their ability in understanding recruitment and selection practices in public Universities in Kenya.

Sample size formula as provided in an article by James E. Bartlett and Joe W. Kotrlik (2001) titled Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate sample size in Survey Research was used to calculate the sample size for this study. Cochran's correction formula was used to calculate the final sample size. To confirm the accuracies, the study will also compare the sample size using the sampling table recommended by Kathuri and Pals (1993) to obtain the sample size of 334 consisting of heads of department and Human Resource Officers in-charge. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed by help of SPSS program, Pearson Correlation and regression.

Key Words: Performance, evaluation, selection, interview

Performance Appraisal in University / Performance evaluation

Performance appraisals, which are employed to assist individual development and organizational planning, are considered an important part of effective human resource management. Much earlier, Meyer et al., (1965) discussed the 'split roles' of performance appraisals, citing developmental feedback and decision making as the two major purposes for conducting appraisals. Over two decades ago, Bernardin and Beatty (1984) identified many interdependent purposes of performance appraisal; include improving the use of resources and serving as a basis for personnel actions. Similarly, Cleveland, 2003) have shown that in practice, performance appraisals appear to be directed to four purposes: to make distinctions among people, distinguish a person's strengths from his or her weaknesses, implement and evaluate human resource systems in organizations, and document personnel decisions.

Performance appraisal is a vital component of a broader set of human resource practices; it is the mechanism for evaluating the extent to which each employee's day-to-day performance is linked to the goals established by the organization (Coutts and Schneider, 2004). Performance appraisal, as a process of identifying, observing, measuring and developing human performance in organizations (Taylor et al., 1994), has attracted the attention of both academics and practitioners. The process is also viewed as making an important contribution to effective human resource management, as it is closely linked to organizational performance (Erdogan, 2002).

The notion that supervisors are not entirely objective when rating their employees' performance is not surprising when considered in the context of the consequences of rating decisions. Formal performance appraisal systems are used in roughly 90 per cent of organizations (Bernthal et al., 1997) for administrative decisions, such as promotions and terminations, as well as for employee development (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). As a result, performance appraisals often directly affect employee development, career trajectories, and the allocation of money and resources. Due to the heavy personal and occupational significance of appraisal ratings, it is understandable how raters might have a difficult time maintaining their objectivity and neutrality when rating their employees.

The quest for precision in performance appraisal was replaced by an emphasis on how performance appraisals could be engaged to further organizational goals (Milkovich and Wigdor 1991). Research on the role of supervisors continued but the emphasis was on their knowledge of the performance appraisal system and the level of trust employees had in their supervisors.

Past theoretical work suggests that the evaluations of worker performance are used to move a worker ahead, and as part of eliciting high effort often in conjunction with pay decisions (Lazear, 1998). From these basic functions, one can hypothesize about the circumstances in which formal evaluations will likely generate substantial benefits, and so justify the costs of establishing and operating such a system. Finally, evaluations are more important early in a worker's tenure for purposes of determining ability (as opposed to achievement) and job assignment (Jovanovic, 1979). Thus, a workforce with many workers early in their tenure is more likely to be subject to performance appraisal, all else equal.

Performance appraisal is a technique that has been credited with improving performance (DeCarlo & Leigh, 1996) and building both job satisfaction and organizational commitment (which has been related to lower levels of turnover) (Babin & Boles, 1996). Yong (1996) defines performance appraisal as "an evaluation and grading exercise undertaken by an organization on all its employees either periodically or annually, on the outcomes of performance based on the job content, job requirement and personal behavior in the position".

Performance management, in its broadest context, is a managerial process that links corporate objectives, performance standards and evaluation, to which the performance review, or performance appraisal, are often applied (Pickett, 2003). In its broadest sense performance appraisal serves three major purposes within an organization: administration, development and communication (Butler et al., 1991). Administrative functioning can be viewed as staffing, compensation, promotion, along with the systems of reward and punishment; whilst development refers to the identification and development potential for future performance, which is linked to personal development planning. Finally, communication aims to provide feedback to employees about their performance and future goals. A more negative view of performance appraisal is offered by Eckes (1994), who claims that performance appraisal records can be used as by an organization to guard against cases of wrongful dismissal.

Three broad areas are identified in the literature as more closely relating to performance appraisal. Firstly, the development of appraisal instruments to accurately and objectively measure human performance (Tznier et al., 2001). Secondly, a focus on supervisor and employee characteristics and their potential bias on performance appraisal ratings (Dewberry, 2001). The third area concentrates on the uses and types of performance appraisal systems within organizations (Scott & Einstein, 2001).

Fung (1995) has argued that HRM is based on the Western model of the rational employee, which may differ significantly from people of other cultures. In particular, Western performance appraisal models are likely to experience difficulty when applied to different cultural environments, with China having been identified as a specific area of concern (Huo & von Glinow, 1995). Of particular importance are studies that suggest that Chinese organizations have utilized appraisal criteria that does not parallel those commonly used in UK companies (Easterby et al., 1995).

There is evidence that when process and outcomes are perceived as fair employee morale and effectiveness is likely to increase (Murphy & Cleveland, 1991), which in the competitive market China is facing can be viewed as a positive outcome. Thus, the findings for the first hypothesis parallel Murphy and Cleveland's (1991) assertion that a basic requirement for an effective performance appraisal system is that those involved in the process accept it as fair. If the reverse is applied, then a performance appraisal that is perceived as unfair, is likely to have dysfunctional outcomes. In contrast, employees with a positive view of performance appraisal are more likely to embrace the process, be better motivated and improve their overall performance.

Conceptual Framework

Independent variables   **Dependent variables**
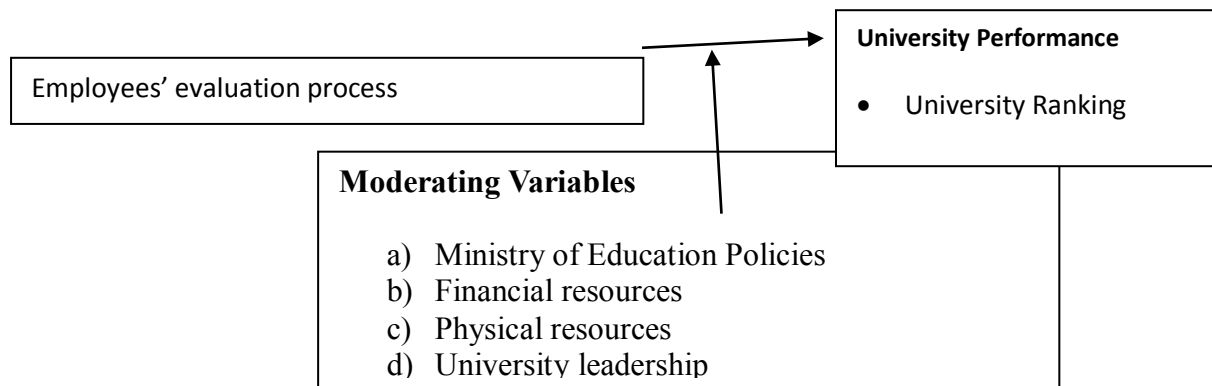

Figure 1: **Effect of recruitment and selection Practices on Public University Performance in Kenya**

Source: Author (2016)

The independent variable of the study was the evaluation practice.

The dependent variable was University performance measured in terms of University ranking. The webometric factors that are evaluated include: academic presence, research, publications, informal scholarly communication and community engagement. Other factors include; general presence, rate of impact, openness and academic excellence.

The aggregated ranking perimeters that sometimes are used include; students' enrollment annual numbers in each university, annual students' graduation rate, number of courses offered, patented innovations in each university, papers published in referred journals, global competitiveness of each university, incubation centres established by each university.

The moderating variables were; Employment laws, Ministry of Education Policies, financial resources, physical resources and University leadership. When Universities establish and implement effective jobe evaluation practices under controlled moderating variables listed above, then the Universities' number of publications in terms of knowledge creation will increase alongside increasing number of graduates. As a result, the world wide ranking is likely to improve.

Target Population

There is a total of twenty-three (23) fully fledged Public Universities in Kenya from which the study draws its data. Total population is 1,643. The target population for this study was the 1,620 employees working as heads of department and 23 heads of the Human Resource department in all the fully fledged Public University Main Campuses in the Republic of Kenya. Public Universities are today keen on the employees' job performance. This is motivated by the introduction of performance contracting among all state corporations.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Normally, it is preferable to collect data from all the 1,643 employees working as heads of department in the fully fledged Public Universities. However, due to cost, time and logistics constraints, sampling was inevitable. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Sample size formula as provided in an article by James E. Bartlett and Joe W. Kotrlik (2001) titled Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate sample size in Survey Research. The following equation was used to calculate the sample size for this study.

$$s = \frac{(z)^2 (p)(q)}{(d)^2}$$

S= Sample size

Z= Value of selected alpha level. In this study 0.25 in each tail = 1.96

d= acceptable margin of error for proportion being estimated = 0.05.

(p) (q)= estimate of variance = 0.25 maximum possible proportion (0.5) (1-0.5). This produces maximum possible sample size.

$$s = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16$$

Cochran's correction formula is used to calculate the final sample size.

$$s_1 = \frac{S}{1 + \frac{s}{n}}$$

Where S1   = Required Sample size

        S   = uncorrected sample

        N   = Total target population

$$s = \frac{384.16}{1 + \frac{384.16}{1,620}} - \qquad = 310.52 \approx 311$$

As calculated above, the sampled heads of department, deans, directors and chair of departments are 311 in number. Total number of Human Resource officers are 23. Therefore, the required sample for this exercise is 334.

Table 1: **Sample and Sample Distribution in the fully fledged Public Universities in Kenya**

SNO	NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY	NO. OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	HEAD HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT	HEADS OF DEPARTMENT SAMPLE SIZE
1	University of Nairobi	171	1	33
2	Moi University	82	1	16
3	Egerton University	70	1	13
4	Kenyatta University	88	1	17
5	Jomo Kenyatta University of and Technology	90	1	17
6	Maseno University	64	1	12
7	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	68	1	13
8	Chuka University	62	1	12
9	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology	66	1	13
10	Multi Media University	58	1	11
11	Masai Mara Univerity	64	1	12
12	Karatina University	60	1	12
13	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology	59	1	11
14	Kisii University	100	1	19
15	Pwani University	49	1	9
16	South Eastern Kenya University	60	1	12
17	Technical University of Mombasa	56	1	11

18	Technical University of Kenya	67	1	13
19	University of Eldoret	62	1	12
20	University of Kabianga	61	1	12
21	Laikipia University	57	1	11
22	Meru University of Science And Technology	54	1	10
23	Kibabii University	52	1	10
	TOTAL	**1,620**	**23**	**311**

Source: Staff Register of the 23 fully fledged Universities in Kenya (2015)

Research Instrumentation

Questionnaires were used to collect primary data to ensure a high response rate. The questionnaires were distributed to respondents to fill and later be collected by the researcher. In order to offer possibility of anonymity, the inclusion of the respondent's names was optional. The questionnaire consisted of closed - ended questions. Questionnaires are useful instruments of collecting primary data since the respondents can read and then give responses to each item and they can reach a large number of subjects (Orodho, 2004)

Validity of the Research Instruments

Both face validity and content validity was checked. Face validity refers to the possibility that a question would be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Pre – testing was done during piloting stage to identify those items and hence the items were modified accordingly. This reduced misunderstanding of the questions asked. The researcher prepared the document in close consultation with the supervisors. Borg and Gall (1985) points out that validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment. The necessary adjustments were made on the instruments to enhance their validity. According to Patton (2002), validity refers to "the extent to which an instrument can measure what ought to be measured." It is the extent to which an instrument asks the right questions in terms of accuracy and meaningfulness which are based on research results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. Realistically, 0.70 is seen as a good value for alpha. (Daniel B. Wright, 2005).

Reliability of the Research Instruments

Thirty-one (31) copies of the instrument were administered to the Heads of Departments, Deans, Directors and the head of Human Resource department at Meru University of Science and Technology. In order to eliminate any ambiguous items, the researcher established that there were no problems in administering the instrument. Logical and procedural difficulties regarding

the study were taken into consideration so as to allow for preliminary data analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), the reliability of the instrument is the measure of the degree to which a research yields consistent results after repeated trials. Cronbach alpha of at least 0.70 will show that the instruments are reliable enough to realize the objectives of the study.

Methods of Data Collection

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from Kabarak University. He further obtained a research permit from National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then booked an appointment with the sampled Universities. Finally, the researcher visited all the 23 public chartered Universities and personally administered the questionnaires. The respondents were guided on how to respond and were further assured of confidentiality. With these assurances, they were given the questionnaires to fill. The data collection process took one month.

Methods of Data Analysis

After data was collected, it was organized and analyzed. For analysis of closed ended questions the computer programme called statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used. It involved analysis by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics consist of brief descriptive coefficients that would summarize given data set that represented the sample. It provided simple summaries about the sample. Data was then presented in terms of frequency tables and charts.

Pearson Correlation has been used to establish the relationship between each of the five mentioned recruitment and selection practices and the employee performance.

A computer programme - Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to establish these relationships. In order to establish which practices contribute more to employees' performance, a regression model was used to establish such intra-relationships. The SPSS tool was used to carry out the Exploratory factor analysis out of which the factor scores were computed.

Data analysis
Table 2: Regression estimates.

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Estimate	Standard Error (S.E)		P - Value
Performance	Evaluation	0.204	0.088		0.020
Performance	Others	0.066	0.038		0.998

Source: Author (2016)

Table 3: Determination of Person correlation coefficients of dependent against independent variables

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Pearson Correlation
Performance	Evaluation	0.212

Source: Author (2016)

Table 4: Estimated varianse for independent variables

Independent variable	Estimate
Evaluation	0.218

Source: Author (2016)

Employee evaluation analysis

At 95% confidence level, if P – value computed is less than 0.05 (significant level), then we conclude that employee evaluation has significant effect on performance. From table no 2, the computed P - value of employee evaluation is 0.020 which is less than 0.05.

Reliability and validity tests

Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument.

0.70 is seen as a good value for alpha. (Daniel B. Wright, 2005)

In our case the calculated Cronbach's alpha is 0.967 which shows that our research instrument was to a very large extent reliable.

Conclusion:

H_1: There is significant relationship between the employee evaluation practice and the performance of Kenyan Public Universities.

Table 5: Index for specific evaluation practice issues.

	Performance evaluation practice issues	Index
1	There is employee performance contracting in place.	66.75
2	Every employee is made to sign his or her performance contract.	60.63
3	The individual employee performance contract is negotiated between the employee and the Head of department.	59.13
4	Performance contracting is linked to performance appraisals.	51.85
5	The performance appraisal tool is discussed and accepted by all staff.	42.32
6	The current performance appraisal tool used is a fair evaluation tool.	42.59
7	The evaluation tool used is objective.	51.98
8	The evaluation process is an annual activity.	57.80
9	The Evaluation tool captures an employee's job description.	51.58
10	The evaluation criteria captures the organization objectives.	51.09
11	The evaluation results are communicated to all staff.	46.03
12	The evaluation process demonstrates good University leadership.	46.33
13	Evaluation results are used to recognize good performance.	47.69
14	Evaluation results are used to sanction poor performers.	41.25
15	The evaluation tool is generally acceptable by all employees.	42.52

Source: Author (2016)

The overall index is = 50.64%.

Noted:
a) Majority of University Implement Performance contracts.
b) Majority of staff sign performance contracts.
c) The tools of evaluation are generally not acceptable among staff in public universities.
d) Performance appraisal tools are not discussed and are generally not acceptable by the majority of staff in the public Universities.
e) That while Performance Contracting is in place, employees sign their performance contracts in all Public Universities.
f) That employees do not agree with the evaluation tool that is administered on them.
g) Evaluation results are hardly communicated to the employees

h) The overall index on employee evaluation in public Universities is 50%.

Recommendations:
a) The directorate of Performance contracting in all Universities should be strengthened.
b) The Commission for University Education should standardize the performance evaluation tool to be used in all Public Universities.
c) The tool should be shared across all cadres in every University.
d) Evaluation results after an appraisal exercise should be communicated to all employees.
e) Appraisal results be linked to rewards and recognition.
f) Every University must develop a rewards and recognition policy.
g) Every University must implement their rewards and recognition policy.
h) Academic publications be considered during employee evaluation.
i) The evaluation process must demonstrate good University leadership.

REFERENCE

Carroll, M., Marchington, M., Earnshaw, J. and Taylor, S. (1999). Recruitment in small firms: Processes, methods and problems. Employer Relations 21(3): 236-250.

Daniel B. Wright (2005). Discovering statistics using SPSS: University of Sussex second edition, sage publications, London 2005.

Jovanovic, Boyan (2004), Selection and the Evolution of Industry. Econometrica, 50(3): 649-670.

Mugenda, O.M. & Mugenda, A.G. (1999). Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Nairobi: ACTS Press.

Orodho, J.A. (2004). Element of Education and Social Science Research Methods.
     Nairobi: Masola Publishers.

Scott A. Snell and Mark A. Youndt (1995), Human resource management and firm performance: Testing a contingency model of executive control. Journal of Management, Vol. 21, No. 4.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

My names are Elijah Walubuka. I am carrying out the following study **"An evaluation of the effectiveness of employee evaluation on performance of the Kenyan Public Universities'.**All information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and privacy and will be used only for academic purposes. Your response will be highly appreciated.

Part I: Respondent Bio – Data

1. What is your age bracket? ☐ Less than 30 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49
   ☐ 50 – 59 ☐ 60 – 69 ☐ 69

2. Write down the name of your department ……………………………………………………

3. Please specify; ☐ teaching ☐ Non- Teaching Staff

4. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

5. Level of education ☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Masters
   ☐ PhD ☐ Professor

6. Years of experience ☐ 5 years ☐ 5-15 years ☐ 16-25 years
   ☐ 25 years

Employee Evaluation process

1. The following items concern the employees' evaluation practices. Please respond by ticking 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Please indicate your level of agreement.

	Performance evaluation practice issues	1	2	3	4	5
1	Employee performance contracting is in place.					
2	Every employee is made to sign his or her performance contract.					
3	The individual employee performance contract is negotiated between the employee and the Head of department.					
4	Performance contracting is linked to performance appraisals.					
5	The performance appraisal tool is discussed and accepted by all staff.					
6	The current performance appraisal tool used is a fair evaluation tool.					
7	The evaluation tool used is objective.					
8	The evaluation process is an annual activity.					
9	The Evaluation tool captures an employee's job description.					
10	The evaluation criteria captures the organization objectives.					
11	The evaluation results are communicated to all staff.					
12	The evaluation process demonstrates good University leadership.					
13	Evaluation results are used to recognize good performance.					
14	Evaluation results are used to sanction poor performers.					
15	The evaluation tool is generally acceptable by all employees.					

.