

INFLUENCE OF CAREER ORIENTED APPRAISALS ON THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN KENYA

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to establish to determine the influence of career oriented appraisals on women's promotion to managerial positions in Kenya. The objectives of the study were: To determine to what extent supervisors conducted career oriented appraisals and to what extent career oriented appraisals influenced promotion of women employees. The study population was 7353 women employees from 32 Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) member organizations. Stratified random sampling was used to draw a sample of 366 women participants. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data and the data was analysed using descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation and cross tabulations were computed to determine the relationship between careers oriented appraisals and promotion of women employees. The findings showed mixed opinions on whether supervisors conducted career oriented appraisals. Some women employees perceived more importance on performance appraisal on the part of the employees than on the employer part. Many women who had received promotions indicated that career oriented appraisals contributed to their promotion.

Keywords: Career oriented appraisals, Appraising performance, Promotions, Human resource

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the performance appraisal was used as a method for determining and justifying the salaries of the employees. Later on it began to be used as a tool for determining rewards and punishments for the past performance of the employees. This approach was a past oriented as it focused only on the past performance of the employees; it did not consider the

developmental aspects of the performance like training and development needs or career developmental possibilities and promotions as well (Bacal, 1999).

The current approach employee appraising or evaluation is an on-going process, takes place informally every day in the organization (Dessler, 2015). Employee appraising entails a means to verify that individuals are meeting the performance standards that have been set for a given time period. Remarks made from such verification are then documented (Dessler, 2008; Gupta 2004). Research indicates that performance appraisal becomes meaningful if it is career oriented. This is because career oriented appraisals are important for promotion (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gehart & Wright 2010; Dessler, 2001). Despite this being the case, Alimo-Metcalfe (1997) found that women experienced disadvantages in having meaningful appraisals because they were not able to talk freely with their supervisors and identify their areas of strength and so they were disempowered. This meant that their strengths and weaknesses could be overlooked by supervisors and this had implications on their careers. Appraising individual work performance is a form of control towards promotions because it ties performance feedback to rewards and corrective actions. Alimo-Metcalfe (1997) adds that this disempowerment of women through performance appraisal is a cause of concern for women because; the performance appraisal reports are used as a basis for promotion and pay. The observation mentioned here may imply that some women who deserve to be promoted and to earn more may not because they may not bring out their strong areas and explain when and where they had performed well. They therefore may not be perceived as good performers for consideration for higher pay or promotion. If this may be the case, then the appraisal report may be seen as inadequate criteria to use to make promotion or pay decisions since it does not discriminate the good performers from the poor performers (Anthony, Perrewe & Kackmar, 2006). Dessler (2001) argues that inadequate employee appraisal lays at the root of discriminatory action such as failure to promote an otherwise qualified candidate. It is against this background that this study seeks to establish the influence of career oriented appraisals on the promotion of women employees in Kenya.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dessler (2008) states that performance appraisals are uniquely personal and important matters to most employees. Employees therefore enter the process with a delicate sensitivity regarding fair treatment. The author adds that most employees may view unfairness as a reflection of the supervisor's actions and also the employer's inaction. A career oriented appraisal must contain content that is relevant to the individual being appraised in a relevant setting. Criteria should be stated and standards specified whenever possible. The appraisal should be able to discriminate

between excellent, good, and poor performance. It must be practical or it must have utility. For instance, a career oriented appraisal should identify employee potential and probable development (Ghosh, 2000; Higson & Wilson, 1995). It can be used as a development tool enabling individual employees to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as others see them (Pinnington & Edwards, 2000). Likewise, Dessler (2008) states that career oriented appraisal assists to match the employees' strengths and weaknesses with a feasible career path and required work. Cheatle (2001) says career oriented appraisals can be used for future development potential and career planning decisions. Dessler (2008) says that it adds to individual development plans and goal setting. The above discussion points out that career oriented appraisal is a contribution of supervisor support and adds to an individual's career planning and goal setting.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive correlational research design. The population of the study was 7353 women employees of non-managerial positions from 32 Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) member organizations level. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 366 women employees. A structured questionnaire was used collect data. The questionnaire gauged respondents opinions about the independent and dependent variables on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strong agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was personally administered to the employees. Data was cleaned and coded and entered into the SPSS tool for analysis. It was analysed by means and standard deviations. A cross-tabulated was computed to determine the influence of career oriented performance appraisal on employee promotion.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

On the first objective the study sought to determine the extent to which supervisors conducted career oriented appraisals in their organizations. Findings on Table 1 show that employees tended towards agreeing (mean 3.142, SD= 1.147) that performance appraisal added to individual goal setting. This means that employees made some reasonable use of performance appraisal results to set their career goals. On whether the performance appraisal made them aware of their strengths and weaknesses, the mean was 2.99, SD= 1.301. These mixed results meant that some were in agreement whereas others disagreed. Similar observations were made on whether he organizations used performance appraisal for career planning; the mean was 2.89; SD=1.276. The results on whether performance appraisal distinguishes between good performance and poor performance had a mean of 2.50; SD=1.524. Clear criteria of performance appraisal in the organization had a mean of 2.38; SD=1.269. The lowest mean

was performance appraisals utility with a mean of 2.00; SD=1.262. The composite mean was 2.65; SD=1.296. This denoted very mixed opinions with regard to performance appraisals being career oriented. The results meant that many employees disagreed that their supervisors conducted career oriented appraisals of their jobs. All the same, there were those who agreed that the performance appraisals were career oriented.

Table1: Career Oriented Appraisals

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In my organization, performance appraisal distinguishes between good performance and poor performance	366	1	5	2.50	1.524
The performance appraisal in my organization has practical utility	366	1	5	2.00	1.262
Performance appraisal in my organization has clear criteria	366	1	5	2.38	1.269
In my organization, performance appraisal makes me aware of my strengths and weaknesses	366	1	5	2.99	1.301
Performance appraisal is used for career planning in my organization	366	1	5	2.89	1.276
Performance appraisal adds to individual goal setting in my organization	366	1	5	3.142	1.147
Composite mean	366			2.65	1.296

The second objective sought to determine the extent to which performance appraisals influence employee promotions. Cross-tabulations were computed determine the findings. Cross tabulations between career oriented appraisals and promotion showed that among those who had received promotion, 57.9%(26.3+31.6) were in agreement their supervisors conducted career oriented performance appraisals, however 74.1%(57.3+16.8) of those who had not been promoted disagreed with the same. Further cross tabulating of career oriented appraisals and bonus/merit pay showed that a total of 48.4%(25.3+23.1) which comprised the bigger fraction of the employees who had received bonus/merit pay were in agreement that their supervisors conducted career oriented appraisals. However, 76%(58.9+17.1) of those who had not received bonus/merit pay were in disagreement. Mean ratings of 3.44 and 1.94 and standard deviations

of 1.464 and 1.301 for the promoted and non-promoted respondents, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. Mean ratings of 3.04 and 1.89 and standard deviations of 1.549 and 1.269 for the bonus/merit pay receiving and non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups, respectively, suggested that most of the scores for each group were clustered around the respective means. The standard deviation values for the non-promoted and the non-bonus/merit pay receiving groups are lower indicating that the clustering is more intense in the scores within these groups. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Career Oriented Performance Appraisal and Promotions

Indicators of Career Advancement		My supervisor conducts career oriented performance appraisals of my job								
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD	
Promotion Status	Yes	9 (15.8)	8 (14)	7 (12.3)	15 (26.3)	18 (31.6)	57 (100)	3.44	1.464	
	No	177 (57.3)	52 (16.8)	15 (4.9)	51 (16.5)	14 (4.5)	309 (100)	1.94	1.301	
		My supervisor conducts career oriented performance appraisals of my job								
		SDA	DA	NS	A	SA	TOTAL	Mean	SD	
Bonus/Merit Pay Status	Yes	24 (26.4)	13 (14.3)	10 (11)	23 (25.3)	21 (23.1)	91 (100)	3.04	1.549	
	No	162 (58.9)	47 (17.1)	12 (4.4)	43 (15.6)	11 (4)	275 (100)	1.89	1.269	

Note: % in Parentheses

SDA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, NS = Not Sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From the findings some women employees seemed to take the appraisal seriously because they used it for their individual goal setting. However, from the findings one can also deduce that the organizations did not pay serious attention to the performance appraisal as many of them did not have clear performance standards. Findings showed that the appraisals did not contribute much to the employee identification of their strengths and weaknesses as mentioned by Pennington and Edwards (2000) who indicate that a performance appraisal can be used as a development tool enabling individual employees to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Findings showed that women employees who had been promoted or received increased earnings had gone through career oriented appraisals. This was in agreement with

Cheatle (2001) who says that career oriented appraisals can be used for future development potential and career planning decisions, this was the case in this study. Additionally this observation was in line with Dessler (2000) says performance appraisal is important for promotion. This study recommends that organizations should streamline employee performance appraisal and set clear standards because performance appraisal is central to performance management process which in turn is used to achieve the best outcomes for an organization. The limitations of the study included that the nature of data collection. The study carried out a cross-sectional survey so only quantitative data was collected. Qualitative data collected using interviewing or town hall techniques would have brought out some depth in the analysis and thus enriched the study findings.

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