



PREPARATION FOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY- KENYA

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Abstract

Preparation for Performance Appraisal (PA) affects performance of commercial banks. When preparing to undertake PA, banks should ensure that; they involve all the stakeholders in setting both organization's and individual targets; and should be communicated to all members to know what is expected of them. Employees should be trained on PA to reduce rating errors. This study sought to establish how preparation for PA affects performance of commercial banks. The study was conducted in Machakos County in Kenya. Data was collected from 16 commercial banks in the county. Sample size for the study was one hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The research instruments used were questionnaire and interview guide, the former having closed-ended Likert scale questions and

the later had guiding questions. Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that there is a positive relationship between Preparation on performance appraisal and performance of commercial banks in Machakos County. The study recommends that organizations should prepare well before conducting employee performance appraisal. Employees should be well trained and involved in setting personal and company goals

Keywords: Preparation, Performance, Stakeholders, Performance Appraisal

INTRODUCTION

Globally, diverse performance evaluation practices are employed depending on business, human resources cadre and corporation cultures. Most businesses know the significant function Performance Appraisal (PA) plays and have increased its adoption considerably. PA has been integrated by organizations in diverse sectors in an attempt to strive and continue to exist in a global competitive economy. In any organization, human capital is the most important asset that can be relied on to attain competitive advantage. Nevertheless, the overall efficiency of human capital should regularly be reviewed hence, creating the need for PA programmes (Munguti, 2017).

Performance Appraisal is the procedure of assessing employees' performance and advancement on a certain job and possible growth in future. The key rationale for undertaking Performance Appraisal is to gather essential information about employees for decision making. It determines employee performance, assists to communicate any areas of improvement to employees and helps the management to come up with a plan of ensuring good relations between supervisors and employees for enhanced organizational performance (Mayol, 2016).

Performance Appraisal monitors employee's work performance so as to make sound personnel decisions. Therefore, it is a planned interface between appraisees and their appraisers where, appraisers look at the appraisees' performance to recognize strengths as well as weaknesses for future performance improvement (Mwangi, 2013). Performance Appraisal evaluates and discusses employee's performance to determine which duties and tasks to assign to employees (Kithuku, 2013).

Appraisal should focus on the outcome an employee obtains; not their behavior characteristics and should assess skills with sensible correctness and consistency so as to discover areas that need improvement (Kithuku, 2013). PA helps an establishment to recognize what workers have attained and what they are capable of, by determining their weak areas for

further training and strong areas so as to motivate them to get better performance (Wanjala & Kimtai, 2015).

The prescribed PA process should start with setting up standards to be used as a basis of comparing the actual employees' performance. The set standards should be communicated to all employees and evaluators in order to know what is expected of them, what will be measured, how and when it will be measured and both parties should agree on the set targets to be achieved. (<http://whatishumanresuorce.com>).

As an orderly assessment of performance, PA gives the right understanding of a worker's ability for more development and improvement. Further, PA promotes an affirmative work atmosphere which leads to efficiency if preparation is done well and good results acknowledged and rewarded based on goal performance actions. This also creates an aggressive spirit and workers are aggravated to advance their concerns which helps to increase self-confidence among them hence, improved performance and consequently overall organizational performance (Mayol, 2016).

Performance Appraisal enables human resource managers in management of career planning and progression planning by assisting in monitoring and keeping records on how an employee performs in a certain job (Mayol, 2016). Ngure (2014), is emphatic that Kenya's financial sector is dominated by commercial banks and any failure will impact negatively to the country's economic growth. This is because if any bankruptcy happens in the sector it will have a contagion effect which can lead to bank crisis, overall financial crisis and economic tribulations. This therefore calls for proper preparation of PA to ensure the process is successful.

In Kenya, the Banking sector has been experiencing low employee performance which has also led to poor performance of some commercial banks. This is attributed to inadequate performance management process (Kibichii, Kiptum & Chege, 2016). In an attempt to eliminate these challenges, the Central Bank of Kenya launched several reform programs including performance management process aiming at enhancing productivity (CBK, 2014).

This is done with a conviction that employees perceive an organization as fair and trustworthy through how it shapes and executes its human resource policies and practices. PA preparation and its consistency are important as it provides tangible evidence of fairness of the organization to its employees' which improves their morale to work hard to attain organizational goals which improves firms' performance (Mbugu, Waiganjo & Njeru. 2015).

Kenyan banks operate nationally and also as multinationals within East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, the need for standardization of performance appraisal and good preparation in terms of setting and communicating targets to all stakeholders; ensuring that there is agreement on the set target; training raters on PA before conducting performance appraisal to avoid major variances on how to manage workforce within the banking industry (Muli, 2014).

Nuwagaba (2015), asserts that performance appraisal has not been undertaken according to the prescribed guidelines. Besides, organizations do not implement the recommendations given mostly on training and promotions. Kondrasuk (2011), also noted that when designing Performance Appraisal System (PAS), organizations' goals are not considered and that the process measures a person not performance leading to demotivation which affects organizational performance.

Preparation is the process of making something ready for use Preparation should ensure standards set are clear, easy to understand, realistic and measurable; and are communicated and agreed upon by both employees' and supervisors at the beginning of the PA period so that employees commit their energies in their goal hence, increased performance (<http://www.merriam.webster.com>).

During the preparation of PA all staff members were informed on performance appraisal importance both to individuals and the organization and the period it would take. The management should prepare performance plan and include the competences which will be looked at during PA. Employees should be given a copy of performance plan to fill indicating the competencies they possess. The management then gets all documentation about the past performance of each employee to assist in setting or reviewing both individual and team goals after which a copy is given to each employee to guide performance (<http://www.businessmanagementideas.com>).

The set standards should be discussed by supervisors and the employees to establish the factors to be included, weights and points to be assigned to each factor based on values and competences of an employee. These should therefore be indicated in the appraisal forms. These increase employees' morale to work and boost performance. When expectations are not clear, employees may not understand them, which may affect the employee's outcome as well as that of banks (Brown et al. 2010).

Goals are set by the top management of the organization and should be in line with the organization's mission and vision statements and strategic goals. They should be negotiated at the beginning of appraisal period, but should not be imposed arbitrarily from the top management. Individual's goals should be achievable and employees should be provided with the necessary tools to work so as to attain organization's strategic goals (Koech, 2014).

Employees who exceed their targets should be rewarded to motivate them to improve their performance the more. The ideal situation dictates that, individual goals should be set by both employees and their supervisors and both determine how goal attainment will be measured and rewarded. This involvement of the employee increases their moral thereby increasing their performance and consequently that of organizations. Lack of employees' involvement in setting goals demotivates them thus, affecting their performance (Muthoka 2016).

During the preparation stage of performance appraisal, both the appraisers and the appraisees should be trained on PA process taking keen on job performance, job responsibilities, and employee professional objectives, problems and concerns about the job. Supervisors and workers should then come together to set goals for the period before the next PA based on the company's vision and mission. The appraisal process should be undertaken in a participatory manner, rather than a lecture. This involvement makes workers to be more committed in their work hence improved performance in the banks (Kibichii, Kiptum & Chege, 2016).

Robert (2014), explains that training is very essential as it can improve individuals' performance as well as that of the organizations. Therefore, employers should not take training programs for granted. They should ensure that trainers conducting the process are well equipped with the necessary skills to teach the skills rather than demonstrating it to employees. This will ensure that workers are equipped with the necessary skills to undertake their role effectively which may increase performance.

Organizations should customize their activities to the ability level of the employee being trained to ensure they understand the concepts being trained. Moreover, periodic updating and retraining, of appraisers' must be done to increase performance (Migiro and Tenderera, 2010). PA also helps in identifying areas where performance is good across all employees or by department. Companies should Standardized performance to allow them analyze, aggregate and calculate areas of strong performance which they can use as benchmarks for other areas which are not performing in the organization (Mwema & Gachunga, 2014).

Raters should be equipped with sufficient knowledge to understand the appraisal process; and be able to interpret standards, use scales and give effective feedback including goal-setting. Rates' should also receive training to introduce them to the appraisal system so as to accept and support the whole process which will increase performance in banks (Muthoka, 2016).

Statement of the problem

Kithuku (2017), asserts that during the preparation for PA, managers should integrate performance appraisal with organizational goals; basing appraisals on accurate and current job

descriptions. Hence, the top management should offer adequate support and assistance to workers to improve performance. The organization should ensure that appraisers are equipped with adequate knowledge on performance appraisal and should conduct appraisals on a regular basis.

Cytonn Investment Report (2016), stressed that despite banks having PA in place, poor performance had been registered in most of the banks leading to staff layoffs, closure of branches and mergers and acquisitions. Banking (Amendment) Act of 2016 requiring commercial banks to lend at 4 % above the CBK rate of 10.0 % saw 1470 bank employees laid off, 39 branches closed and 7 banks acquired as cost cutting strategy.

Employees should be trained on PA to fill the knowledge gap and strength the desired values in doing the work. They should also taught what PA measures and the time it will be measured, so as to know what is expected of them. If preparation is done well, employees will be willing to work hence increasing organizational performance. If it is not done properly then employees will be dissatisfied with PA which will affect their performance and consequently the organizational performance. This study will therefore establish whether preparation in PA affects performance of commercial banks in Machakos County (<http://www.merriam.webster.com>).

This study was carried out at a time when commercial banks are experiencing cut throat competitions, which have led to closure of several bank branches and retrenchment of workers, mergers and acquisitions as cost cutting measures for survival. The study would unearth the problems affecting PA and which may have led to the poor performance witnessed in the banking sector

Research hypothesis.

H0: Preparation before Performance Appraisal has no effect on Performance of Commercial Banks in Machakos County.

H1: Preparation before Performance Appraisal has effect on Performance of Commercial Banks in Machakos County.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by several theories.

Goal setting

Goal setting theory was developed by Latham and Locke 1979. It emphasizes that setting specific challenging goals and being committed to the set goals increases motivation to work. Goals are future oriented and drive employee's behavior to work toward them. Once accomplished, they motivate individual to set higher goal and increase performance to attain

them which consequently increases organizational performance. When the goals set are too easy or too difficult and employees are not committed to the goals or the goals are not set at all, employees will not put effort to achieve them and this will affect organizational performance (<http://www.tankonyutar.hu>).

According to Othman (2014), Goal setting theory supports the agreement of objectives between employee and supervisors. Set goals should be specific and challenging. If specific employees' will know what is expected of them and they will put more efforts to achieve; if high and challenging, when they have been accepted by employees' then high performance will be achieved. When an employee is committed to a certain high target, he/she is likely to persist until the target is achieved hence, increased performance. Where there is no agreement on the goals set, dissatisfaction sets in lowering productivity. Chompukum (2013), Asserts that goals affect direction, drive performance and persistence of employee if they are clear and participatory hence, increasing performance.

Expectancy theory

Expectancy theory was developed in 1964 by Victor Vroom. The theory assumes that people will be motivated to exert more effort on their work if there is a relation between efforts exerted, performance gained and compensation they get. Individuals will therefore adjust their behavior to attain these goals in order to get rewards. It suggests that an individual will look at several outcomes associated with different levels of performance and will choose to follow the level that gives him/her the maximum reward (Hepngetich & Bula, 2017).

In expectancy theory, for an employee to put more efforts towards attaining organizational goals will highly depend on how the organization will develop and undertake it's PA. For employees to achieve their set targets, they should know what would be the reward associated with attainment of goals. When an employee believes that a high performance will lead to a better compensation for the work done, he/ she will work extra hard in order to attain the set target so as to get the reward attached on such performance leading to growth in banks (Muthoka, 2016).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Several empirical studies have been done on Performance appraisal. Wanjala and Kimtai (2015), studied the Influence of performance appraisal on employee performance in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County in Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design. Sample size of 178 employees was used. Questionnaire was the main method of collecting data. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics mostly frequencies and percentages.

The study revealed that PA can be an essential tool in improving employees' performance if they see it as being fair and objective in facilitating their upward mobility and are involved in the whole process. The duo recommended for training of managers on PA, clear and early communication on any changes made on the PA rating for each concerned person to know what is expected of them.

Mulwa (2017), studied the Influence of Performance Management System on Employee Performance in Commercial Banks in Kitui Town. The study employed descriptive research design. Sample size of 94 employees was used. Observations, questionnaire and interviews methods were used to collect data. The findings were that PA positively affects motivation and work performance. The study recommended that training should be based on performance gaps, the process should be done professionally, should be unbiased, employees should be involved in setting their targets and regular feedback should be given.

Antwi, Opuku, Ampadu and Osei (2016), assessed Human Resource Management Practices of Public Banks from Employees' Perspective: Case Study of Selected Branches of Ghana Commercial Banks Kumasi was used. Descriptive research design was applied. Sample size of 80 employees from selected bank branches was used. Instrument of data collection used was questionnaire. Data processing and analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. The study revealed that performance appraisal, internal communication, and training and development, reward/remuneration greatly influence employees' performance hence organizational performance. The study recommended for adequate and appropriate training on PA, merit- based motivation, continuous interaction between senior management and workers to update them on any changes in organization, regular feedback and fair remuneration to employees.

Chompukum (2013), studied performance management effectiveness in Thai banking industry: a look from performers and a role of interactional justice. The research design used was descriptive. Sample size population used was 476 employees. Questionnaire was mainly used as an instrument of data collection. Data was processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science. The study found that employees attitude towards performance evaluation affects their attitudes towards performance management effectiveness. Employees are keen to receive feedback which ties rewards to performance than on how to develop skills. It recommended that organization should link performance with rewards, good communication between supervisors and employees on performance, consistence on performance evaluation across all people and that feedback given on continuous basis is paramount.

Migiro and Tenderera (2011), studied evaluating the performance appraisal system in the bank of Botswana. The research design used was qualitative with a sample population of 417 representatives. Questionnaire was used to collect data and analysis done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The duo discovered that there was no consistence I undertaking PA and rewarding employees performance was based on performance appraisal results. It recommended that employees and evaluators be regularly trained to reduce bias, increase transparency of the appraisal system, regular feedback be given to employees on their performance and reduce inconsistency of PA across the banks.

According to Khayinga, Mamuli and Wekesa (2016), when designing and formulating a job description, performance standards for the job are developed. These set targets must be clear, easy to understand and measurable and must also be communicated to both employees and supervisors. Employees should know what is expected of them to make them more focused on their work hence improving performance. Supervisors on the other hand should know what to measure, when and how.

The set standards should be discussed by supervisors and the employees to establish the factors to be included, weights and points to be assigned to each factor based on values and competences of an employee (Brown et al. 2010). Targets should be negotiated at the beginning of appraisal period, but should not be imposed arbitrarily from the top management. Individual's goals should be achievable and employees should be provided with the necessary tools to work so as to attain organization's strategic goals (Koech, 2012).

Communication is very important in managing performance and must be effective to ensure the right information is given to employees. This reduces resistance due to changes in the standards set, anxiety and fear. The management therefore, should develop a shared vision that will motivate employees to pull an organization to a mutual purpose (Kiara, 2017). Armstrong (2009), asserts that, employees will accept the set goals if, they trust their managers and the goals set are fair and reasonable. Therefore, individual should participate in setting goals and the management should provide the support and resources required to achieve these goals.

A gap will always remain between what employees know and what they should know regardless of how careful applicants will be screened. It is therefore important that employees are trained on PA to fill this knowledge gap. Employees need to know how to prepare for and conduct a self-review exercise (Nuwagaba, 2015). Training does not only enhance employee skills and knowledge but also strengthens the desired values (Mbugua, Waiganjo & Njeru, 2015).

During the preparation stage of performance appraisal, both the appraisers and the appraisees should be trained on PA process taking keen on job performance, job responsibilities, and employee professional objectives, problems and concerns about the job. Supervisors and workers should then come together to set goals for the period before the next PA based on the company's vision and mission (Kibichii, Kiptum & Chege, 2016).

Raters should be equipped with sufficient knowledge to understand the appraisal process; and be able to interpret standards, use scales and give effective feedback including goal-setting. Ratees' should also receive training to introduce them to the appraisal system so as to accept and support the whole process which will increase performance in banks (Muthoka, 2016).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. A descriptive research is a process of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject in the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). Kombo & Trump (2010), are emphatic that the purpose of descriptive research is not only restricted to fact findings, but often results in formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problem.

The descriptive design chosen was supported by a previous research by Kimeu (2018). Three hundred and eighty (380) employees' in commercial banks formed the study population. The target population was sixteen (16) commercial banks in Machakos County.

Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling technique was applied. Total population was divided into three (3) strata's based on their ranks and sample items were randomly selected from each stratum. The researcher picked a sample size of 195 (one hundred and ninety-five) employees where; forty eight (48) managers, seventy nine (79) supervisors and sixty eight (68) clerks were picked. Yamane scientific formula was used to get this sample size.

Yamane formula-

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

N= target population of the study

n= sample size

e2= constant

Data Collection Tools

Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guide. The researcher used interview guide for managers and structured closed-ended items' for the other commercial bank employees in Machakos County.

Analytical Approach

To test whether the relationship between preparations on PA affected performance of commercial banks, Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to measure the relationship between the two variables (Kasomo, 2006). Further, coefficient of relationship was calculated to establish the amount of change the independent variable had on the dependent variable (Newton & Rudestan, 1999).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Preparation on Performance Appraisal and Performance of Commercial Banks

In the first objective of the study, the researcher sought to assess establish how preparation on performance appraisal affects performance of commercial banks in Machakos County Kenya. The researcher sought to find out whether banks set and communicate targets to employees, train employees on PA and rating errors on PA. Various questions were posed to the respondents to facilitate this investigation.

Training on Performance Appraisal

Majority (63%) of the respondents agreed with the item "The bank organizes for specialized training of its staff on PA". Another majority (59.8%) of the respondents agreed with the item "The bank employees receive training on in the work place on performance appraisal regular basis"; another 82% of the respondents agreed with item "Employee training on performance appraisal benefits the employer through good performance. On whether the company always engages trained appraisers every time the appraisal process is conducted" a significant (65%) of the respondents agreed. Additionally, a majority (84%) of the respondents agreed with the item that the use of trained appraisers results to fairness in the process. Finally, a majority (60%) of the respondents agreed with the item that Training appraisers reduces variations in recommendations on the appraised by the appraisal panel committee hence increasing confidence in the process. The findings are as indicated in Table 1:

Table 1: Training Preparations

Training on performance appraisal	SA(5)	A(4)	N(3)	D(2)	SD (1)
1 The bank organizes for specialized training of its staff on PA	34%	29%	15%	15%	8%
2 The bank employees receive training on in the work place on performance appraisal regular basis.	29%	30.8 %	4%	21.2%	15%
3 Employee training on performance appraisal benefits the employer through good performance.	50 %	32 %	8%	10%	7%
4 The company always engages trained appraisers every time the appraisal process is conducted	30 %	35%	5%	15%	15%
5 The use of trained appraisers results to fairness in the process	47%	37%	6%	5%	5%
6 Training appraisers reduces variations in recommendations on the appraised by the appraisal panel committee hence increasing confidence in the process.	25%	35	20%	15%	10%

Goal/ Target Setting

The researcher also examines how important Goal setting is in preparation for appraisal. Various questions were posed to the respondents to facilitate this investigation.

Table 2 indicates that only 47% of the respondents agreed that the institution employees are involved in setting targets/goals in the bank. Another greater majority (70%) of the respondents also agreed that Goal setting in the bank is clear and achievable. Another greater majority (76%) of the respondents agreed that Involvement of employees in goal setting contributes to high performance in the bank. However, only 44% of the respondents agreed that Goal setting in the bank is based on employees' abilities. On whether the employees and supervisors in the bank negotiate resources necessary to achieve the goals 69% of the respondents agreed.

These findings agree with Koech (2012) who noted that, targets should be set prior to commencement of the performance contract. The targets should be communicated and agreed upon by both parties, so that managers and the employees can be fairly held accountable for their achievement or lack of it at the end of the performance contract period. Additionally, Brown et al (2010) observed that when expectations are not clear, employees may not understand them, which may affect the employee's outcome as well as that of banks. It therefore showed

that preparation of PA positively affected performance as employees were trained on PA and involved in setting the targets. The results are as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Goal/ Target Setting

Goal/target setting practice	5	4	3	2	1
Employees are involved in setting targets/goals in the bank	16%	37 %	11%	26%	10%
Goal setting in the bank is clear and achievable	35%	35 %	11 %	8%	11%
Involvement of employees in goal setting contributes to high performance in the bank.	23 %	53 %	3%	18%	3%
Goal setting in the bank is based on employees' abilities	15%	29%	1%	34%	21%
The employees and supervisors in the bank negotiate resources necessary to achieve the goals	20 %	49%	11 %	13%	7%

Relationship between the preparation on PA and Performance of Commercial Banks Correlation Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was utilized to investigate the relationship between the variables. These included an error term, whereby a dependent variable was expressed as a combination of the independent variable. The variable preparation has shown the most statistically significant coefficient as indicated by a t-ratio of 1.467. This implies that an increase in preparation of performance appraisal will effectively improve performance of commercial banks in Machakos County by a margin of 1.467 as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Regression Results of the Relationship between Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t- values	t- critical	Significance
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	4.481	5.30		0.912	1.667	0.472
Preparation	1.421	1.222	0.97	1.467	1.667	0.375

NB: T-critical Value 1.667 (statistically significant if the t-value is less than 1.667: from table of t-values).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that preparation before performance appraisal is significant on performance of commercial banks. Although small majority were involved in training and goal settings, a certain percentage of employees were not involved in training and goal setting. Goal setting was not based on employees' abilities. Some banks did not involve trained appraisers to undertake performance appraisal which increased rating errors hence affecting performance.

From the findings and conclusion, the study found that a number of firms did not do proper preparation which affected performance appraisal hence performance. The study therefore recommends for proper training of employees based on performance gaps. Supervisors should be trained on appraisal to reduce rating errors. Employees should be included in setting personal and firms' goals based on employees abilities.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study confined itself to Commercial Banks and specific practices. Therefore the results may not be generalized for the whole banking industry. This is because the views expressed by the respondents may only relate to Commercial banks. This is also because other banking institutions such as micro finance and other firms may be using other performance appraisal practices.

The main limitations of this study was that the respondents were reluctant in giving full information fearing that the information asked would be used to intimidate them or paint a negative image about them or the firm. The researcher handled this problem by carrying an introduction letter from the University and assured the respondents that the information they gave would be treated with confidentiality and would be used purely for academic purposes. There was also limitation of time and funds to increase the study sample.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- i. The study was conducted in Machakos County. The cases and phenomenon could be different in other counties. It is therefore recommended that other similar studies be done in other counties with a view of understanding better the factors which affect performance appraisal
- ii. In this regard, the study was not exhaustive performance appraisal practices and performance of commercial banks. Therefore, scholars and academicians should carry out further studies on the same topic, however, focusing on other factors not considered

by this study. A similar study could be carried out on other variables not included in this study.

- iii. The study confined itself to commercial banks. This research therefore should be replicated in other sectors to establish the performance appraisal practices adopted in those sectors. At the same time it is important to explore how commercial banks can establish the formal appeal and control system, and keep transparency in performance appraisal. This further study may help banks or other organizations to improve its performance appraisal system specifically, and make it work professionally

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