

An Assessment of Factors Affecting Employee Performance in Zambian Local Authorities: A Case Study of Lukulu Town Council



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ABSTRACT: Organizational performance through employee performance has been a major global concern of companies and as such various organizations have shifted focus on engineering their employee management processes. The purpose of the study was to assess factors affecting employee performance in Zambian municipalities. The study was guided by three objectives which were; to establish effects of employee motivation on employee performance; to find out the effect of working conditions on employee performance, and to establish the effect of management style on employee performance. A mixed method approach was used with questionnaire and scheduled interviews as data collection tools. A census was used to derive the total sample size of 93 employees. Stratified sampling technique was utilized where 93 respondents were administered with questionnaires while 11 respondents were selected for qualitative data collection through interviews. The study utilized a descriptive approach to quantitative data analysis through the use of SPSS while qualitative data was themed for content analysis. The study response was 97%. The results revealed that majority of the employees at 83% stated that they did not receive enough morale to achieve their tasks which depicted lack of motivation through performance management strategies and feedback. Similarly, 70% stated that they lacked a proper environment, tools, personal protective clothing, and equipment to undertake their tasks effectively and efficiently. Further, 75% stated that there was no key consultation and feedback with regards to tasks and grievances, which are a critical component for motivation and effective performance of roles and responsibilities. Employees felt discriminated which is contrary to the aspirations of the Equity Theory. The study concluded that despite setting clear organizational goals, management lacked proper merit based performance management strategies interlaced with motivation techniques, the creation of a conducive working environment through provision of requisite tools for effective performance and proper establishment of both vertical and horizontal work relationships between superiors and subordinates for effective communication. Therefore, the study strongly recommends the establishment of reward based performance management systems with measurable key performance indicators to accord feedback to the employees along with the need to invest in employee health and safety through provision of well-ventilated office space, personal protective equipment and other working tools. There must be deliberately established systems of top-bottom communication to create a sense of belonging and promote inclusiveness in decision making for employees at production level through necessary key consultations and performance feedback.

KEY WORDS: Factors Affecting, Employee Performance, Zambian Local Authorities, Lukulu

1. INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

Employee performance has been widely researched in different dimensions across various disciplines and cultures with the view of comprehending organizational behaviors, concepts, and resource that foster performance (Bono & Judge, 2003; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Armstrong & Taylor (2014) define performance as the behavior yields results. On the other hand, performance is said to be an individual's ability to perform good or bad at their job (Javed, Balouch & Hassan, 2014). According to Abdullah (2014), employee performance is the achievement of targets set in the institutional work plan carried out by the job incumbents in an organization. It can, therefore, be said that employee performance is considered as behaviour and input of workers towards the attainment of the overall organizational goals. In order to make informed decisions, managers should be able to understand the job performance of each employee (Sonnentag, Volmer & Spychala, 2008). The importance of employee performance does not only entail organizational success but also enhances employee motivation and job satisfaction through career development opportunities (Siahaan et al., 2016). Employee job performance is a widely acceptable key performance indicator of organizations' success (Masa'deh et al., 2017). Stressors greatly affect employee performance as they cause

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unpleasant emotions of anger and frustrations. Stressed employees are most likely to be less motivated, less confident, and disengaged (LePine et al., 2016). Employee job performance can be increased by implementing behavior focused strategies. These strategies help in stimulation of desirable behaviors (Breevaart et al., 2015). Anitha (2014), discloses some of the factors that cause stress among employees (if not positively handled) and in turn affect performance among them include: organizational atmosphere, superior-subordinate relationships, co-worker relationships, compensation policies, and procedures and employee engagement. Researchers reveal that efficiency and effective employee performance can only be attained when the workforce is well-paid, well-motivated, and operating in environment with good working conditions which recognize the employee's individual goals and aligns them with the overall organizational goals (Ibid).

Lukulu town council is a local authority established under the Local Government Act, No. 22 of 1995 now revised as Local Government Act, No.2 of 2019, and Cap 281 of the Laws of Zambia. The act provides for a three-tier local government administration system namely: city, municipal, and district councils. The Act gives effect to the decentralization policy; decentralized functions, responsibilities and services at all levels of the local government. Lukulu town council is one of the oldest districts in the country and was established during the period of the First Republic in the year 1960s. Lukulu district is located in the Northern part of Western Province of Zambia. The district shares boundaries with Mongu district to the South, Zambezi district to the North, Kabompo, Kasempa, Kaoma and Mitete district to the west. Lukulu district covers an area of 9,347Km² (Central Statistics Office, 2010).

In its quest to meet its objective, the council provides numerous services namely; garbage collection, developmental plans approvals, opening and maintenance of township roads, cemetery services, issuance of business permits and licenses, street lighting, food inspection, cleaning and maintenance of markets, sewage drainage systems and other constituency developmental activities (LGA,2019). To effectively finance these operations and provide services to the community, councils collect revenue through taxes, personal levies, fees, rentals, charges among others. However, the sound financial position of local authorities was neutralized by government's decision to transfer almost all flourishing sources of income from councils through the enactment of statutory instrument number 55 of 2000 and the Water and Sanitation Act no.28 of 1997 to utility councils thus collection of income tax, sales tax, road tax and water and electricity charges were no longer under the jurisdiction of local authorities.

In performing their functions, Lukulu town council like any other local authorities country wide has faced numerous constraints due to the imbalances in budget expenditures and revenue based. To address these imbalances, the government through the Local Government (Amendment) Act no.12 of 2014 the government established the Local Government Equalization Fund. Pest (2017) argues that LGEF is a temporal strategy to address the imbalances due to its inability to promote equality among councils countrywide. This is evident in the continued presence of heaped uncollected garbage, unmaintained local roads and untidy burial sites, irregular statutory inspections of markets stalls, restaurants and butcheries among others (Ibid). *Due to substandard performance, communities have lost confidence in the capacity of local authorities to efficiently and effectively deliver adequate and quality services to the general populace (Lolojih, 2008). The poor performance by councils is arguably due to lack of; managerial skills, modern technology and financial capacity which in greatly affects operations, payments of employee wages, suppliers and statutory bodies (Ibid).*

1.1 Problem Statement

In spite the interventions by the central government such as the timely provision of the Local Government Equalization Funds (LGEF) to local authorities and recruitment of qualified personnel, the performance of employees at Lukulu Council towards the attainment of infrastructural projects, statutory obligations, administrative deadlines, and overall delivery of services in the district is below par. For example, the Committee Report on Local Government Accounts, (2017) for the financial year 2015, 2016 and 2017 revealed that local authorities failed to prepare Consolidated Annual Financial Statements and activity reports as required by law and controlling officers of these councils blamed employees for substandard work and failure to perform or meet their tasks (Public Finance Management Act, 2018). Additionally, Lukulu Town Council, in its quest to render services to the communities, has received considerable support from the central government with skill-based trainings and workshops to enhance their performance. However, Lukulu Town Council continues to experience financial irregularities, employee turnover, employee late coming, employee absenteeism and increased demand for council services such as garbage collection, poor maintenance of township roads (ZNBC, 2021). Lukulu Town Council was cited for poor garbage collection services and failure to maintain dumpsite contrary to the stipulation in the Environmental Act no.12 of 2011. The findings revealed that despite being fully funded, the council neither fenced the dumpsite, installed warning signs nor compacted the waste with a layer of soil thus exposing the community to health hazards (Auditors report, 2020). Further, the council has experienced delayed implementation and completion of constituency development projects. The short- and long-term developmental projects are not achieved within

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the stipulated timeframe instead are carried over to other financial years thus affecting economic growth and development within the district with an example of Lipeho bridge, a two months project contracted in 2017 but had not been completed by 2021(Auditors report, 2021). A recent report by the Auditor General revealed that there is no performance improvement at the council as queries resurfaced. The report queried the councils' failure to manage and fence the dumpsite, lack of receptacles in market trading places, failure to collect revenue, failure to safeguard public properties and delayed completion of projects (Dick, 2021).It is evident that most of the performance queries highlighted in the report are purely management and administrative related matters. Recently, the Local Government Service Commission had dismissed 15 employees from 10 local authorities among these councils was Lukulu Town Council. The 15 employees were dismissed on charges of misappropriation of funds, theft, dishonest conduct, gross negligence and absenteeism (ZNBC, 2021). The poor performance of council employees due to the above vices required a prompt response to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of local authorities through a committed and dedicated workforce (Ibid). It is evident that government funding (LGEF) is not enough to enhance employee performance and productivity as officers tasked with various responsibilities performed poorly at their tasks resulting in poor service delivery. It can, therefore, be asserted that despite the deployment of well skilled and educated employees, there are other factors affecting the performance of employees at Lukulu Town Council, hence the need to carry out this systematic study to ascertain the factors for a possible salvage strategy.

1.2 Study Objectives

- To establish the effect of employee motivation on employee performance.
- To find out the effect of working conditions on employee performance.
- To establish the effect of management style on employee performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Empirical Review

2.1.1. Overview of the Effects of Motivation on Employee Performance

Employees are the most valuable assets of any organisation, as such the success of any organisation is dependent on their performance thus how well motivated employee are has a direct negative or positive effect on performance (Torrington et al.,2008). The practices and policies in Human Resource Management greatly influence the performance of employees and the organisation at large. An example of Job satisfaction which is viewed as a key element to promoting organisational performance and employee commitment. However, researchers have identified motivation to be a mediating factor to job satisfaction. Motivation is considered to be an important influence to performance (Torrington et al., 2008).

Cameron & Green (2019) define motivation as the inner force which generates energy for individuals to accomplish organisational and personal goals. Larsson et al., (2018), state motivation as a process which initiates and maintains goal oriented performance. According to a study by Breugh et al.,(2018), motivation takes two forms; extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsically motivated individuals generate energy for accomplishment from extra incentives such as wages , promotion, recognition, praises and appreciation (Larsson et al.,2018) whereas intrinsically motivated individuals are self motivated by virtue of which innovate ways to perform their job. Their energy emanates from performing challenging jobs and efficiently achieving their targets (Jacoby, 2018). It can be argued that intrinsic motivation is cost effective for organisations and more durable because it can not be imposed by management but is inherent in employees (Vanek , 2017).

Motivation is fundamental to employee behavior both in private and public organizations as it has a great influence on employee's loyalty, good citizenship, and job performance of high output and high quality, (Bateman and Snell, 2007). The effects of motivation do not stop with performance. In a team of motivated employees, there are fewer work accidents, fewer rates of ethical problems, less employee turnover and lower levels of absenteeism (Brown et al., 1998). Furthermore, motivated employees are more committed to their organizations and show less insubordination, grievance and are creative, innovative and responsive to customers, thus contributing to the success of the organization (Jurkiewicz et al,1998).

According to the findings in a case study carried out by Ibrahim & Brobbey,(2015) in the financial sector in Ghana which aimed at establishing whether employees were affected by motivation. The findings revealed that employee performance was enhanced after introductions of various incentives such as career development through leadership opportunities, employee recognition, employee engagement, good work environment, and technological advancement. The study concluded that motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, helps address the personal needs of employees resulting in improved efficiency and effective performance (Ibid).

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Similarly, studies undertaken by other scholars sought the relationship between motivation and staff performance and findings revealed that for organisations to gain competitive advantage, organisation must constantly seek to improve employee motivation strategies as employee needs are constantly evolving especially when employees' are benchmarked on the external labor market (Waiyaki, 2017). Additionally, the study at Pam Golding Properties concluded that goal-setting employee participation and the monetary packages were not enough to motivate employees to enhance performance because employee motivation was short-lived thus there was need for intrinsic strategies such as mentorship programs, training and development and employee engagement (Ibid). In the same vein, Hamakumra (2020) acknowledges the relationship between motivation and performance however, difficulties lies in coming up with the best strategies of motivating the employees to optimal performance.

It is argued that the valuable assets in organisations are the human resources. However, humans by nature are difficult to handle as they have their own personal goals accompanied with various peculiar behaviours that should be managed (Noko & Nwuzor, 2021). A well managed and motivated work force is aligned to the strategic goal of the organisation as such yields productivity. Individuals have their own behaviour, beliefs, morality, attributes, ideas, and perspectives to the organisation as such efficiently managing these diversities results in improved working relations and employee performance (Ibid).

According to findings of a study conducted in the United States (US) which surveyed a total sample of 292 managers and employees of online networking service company, results showed that even in adverse workplace conditions, employees' performance can increase in presence of spiritual well-being (Tejeda, 2014). It can therefore be argued that spiritual well-being is an intrinsic motivator which supplements the need for good workplace conditions.

2.1.2 Effects of Working Conditions on Employee Performance

Traditional management focused on assessing the performance of individual employees and allocating rewards as such effective performance was seen as the result of the interaction between individual ability and motivation. However, modern management has increasingly recognised the role of a conducive work environment or conditions on effective performance of employees (Torrington, Hall & Stephen, 2008).

A good work environment entails an organization's ability to provide proper infrastructure and work facilities to employees. Adequate work environment greatly enhances employee performance as the adage states "a health work force is productive" thus health employees achieve their goals which enhances the overall organizational performance (Nora, Greg & Michael, 2002).

A study conducted in a Tanzanian health facility by Oswald (2012) focused on identifying the performance of health workers in the district of Tarine affected by their working conditions. Findings revealed that there was an adverse effect on employee performance which showed that the availability of work equipment, drugs and a sound work space was enough to boost performance among health workers while the absence of these variables led to poor performance of employees (Ibid). Similarly, Tetteh et al., (2012) findings upon conducting a case study confirms the existence of a relationship between employee performance and employee work environment.

Workplace conditions immensely contribute to employee job performance and satisfaction. Work conditions are difficult to measure though poor work conditions manifest through organizational performance (Mansour, 2016). Researchers have revealed that in Europe work conditions have great impact on employee mental health and performance (Barnay, 2015).

A study on worksite wellness program involving a sample size of 16,929 employees in Colorado revealed that workplace safety significantly impacts employee performance. Chronic working conditions demotivate employees leading absenteeism, *laissez-faire*, turn over and ultimately low performance. Therefore, it is imperative that employers come up with proper strategies to foster healthy working conditions and reduce the risk of injuries (Jinnett et al., 2017). Similarly, a study of employees at Latina Hotels revealed that employees were exposed to workplace hazards and poor work conditions. The poor working conditions caused stress and poor performance among the employees (Hsieh, 2016).

A similar study conducted in Madhya Pradesh precisely in the healthcare industry with total sample of 1,010 from various private and public healthcare hospitals revealed the significance of good working conditions in workplaces, the study showed the existing impact of work conditions on attrition rate (Jadon & Upadhyay, 2018). Mizuno et al., (2018), confirm the significance of good working conditions in promoting job satisfaction and employees' retention. To support this, the researcher conducted a study to prove the hypothesis on 692 registered nurses at a university hospital, results showed that good working conditions enhances employees' job satisfaction and retention.

2.1.3 Effects of Management Style on Employee Performance

Geier (2016) defines management style also referred to as leadership style as the ability to influence, direct, encourage, and control subordinates to execute their tasks willingly towards the attainment of the set organisational goals. The style of leadership

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is argued to greatly affect the performance of employees in an organisation. The viability of an organisation greatly depends on the style of management; effective management minimizes employee resistance to change thus develops skilled problem-solving workforce (Ibid). Managers use management techniques such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling to influence the behaviour of their subordinates through motivation to follow issued instructions (Robbins, 2003). Kavanaugh & Ninemeier, (2001) identify factors determining the management style; characteristics of the leaders, subordinate and the organizational environment.

Kavanaugh & Ninemeier (2001), assert that autocratic leadership style is common among centralized structures, when leaders are the sole decision makers of an organization, they exhibit autocratic leadership style while a democratic style implies that decision making authority is decentralized; leaders through delegating empower to subordinates with decision making authority while a laissez-faire style exists in organizations with massive delegated functions of authority to subordinates. According to (Ogunola et al., 2013) both employee and organizational performance are subject to the adopted leadership/management style in performing their roles as managers and leaders. Therefore, among other factors that affect the prudent mobilization, allocation and utilization of resources to enhance organizational performance, the style of leadership is cardinal to attain organizational goals. Hersey et al., (2001) advocate for leaders to fully understand the style of management and the appropriate power required to attain organizational success through effectiveness.

Studies conducted by Suharto and (Bank et al., 2016; Harwiki, 2016) reveal the positive and significant effect of leadership style on employee performance. However, it can be argued that the relationship can only be deemed positive when transformational leadership style is applied with the view of creating a conducive work environment through good policies and practices which meet the individual needs of the workforce.

Transformational leaders are leaders with a good sense of judgment, competent communication skills and confidence. In addition, Transformational leaders value employee development; they set clear goals and strive to extrinsically and intrinsically motivate employees to attain and challenge the set goals (Suliman et al., 2011). Additionally, transformational leaders do not discriminate against employees in terms of their race, color, sex, family background and so on but treat them fairly and enhance all employees to get the same level of knowledge.

Other scholars argue that other than transformational leadership, other leadership styles can influence performance. Feriyanto & Triana (2015) state that leadership style can not be separated from performance; charismatic leaders performing duties diligently, mirror their characters on employees who tend to view them as role models thus enhancing the superior-subordinate relationship leading to enhanced performance. A case study carried out by Lodinya (2014), based on literature reviewed investigated the effects of the style of management on employee performance in Norwegian People's Aid, Yei Vocational Training Center. The findings revealed that competitive advantage through good performance is attained when the style of management reflects the interests of employees (Ibid).

2.2 Gaps in the Literature

Evidently, numerous studies on employee performance have been undertaken by various scholars worldwide with focus on various distinctive institutions. However, there is no evidence of a study undertaken whose focus is similar to that of the current study; An assessment of factors affecting employees' performance in Zambian Local Authorities particularly at Lukulu Town Council. The study will profoundly help the Zambian Government, specifically the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, in its quest to attain the National Development Goals embedded in the Eighth National Development Plan. Responsible officers in various local authorities through the findings of this study may understand and apply ways of enhancing employee performance to attain their objectives by addressing the assessed factors affecting employees' performance. Additionally, the study will reveal the challenges faced by employee in organizations thereby assisting in policy formulation as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented policies such as the Employment Code No.3 of 2019.

2.3. Theoretical Frameworks

The study was guided by two (2) fundamental theories; goal setting, and equity theories.

2.3.1. **Goal setting theory** developed by Locke (1968) asserts humans are motivated to take action when rewards are attached to goals or performance outcomes. Motivation is as a result of rewards attached to performance outcomes or attainment. The reward, attached to the performance should not be ambiguous but should be clearly stated. Locke emphasizes the need for feedback to allow employees assess their performance progress towards the goal (Femi, 2013). This theory also highlights the need for goals to be precise. In relation to the study on assessing factors affecting employee performance, the theory emphasize

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the need for employees to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, as specific goals provide effort direction for employees as well as assess the adequacy of the efforts directed towards the goals by the supervisor and subordinate (Wanjala & Kimutai, 2015).

2.3.2. Equity theory was proposed by (Adams 1956) in an attempt to establish the reaction of employees when subjected to unfair treatment as compared to other employees. Equity theory gauges the fairness of employees' outcomes relative to others. According to this theory, the importance of justice and fairness at a workplace cannot be over emphasized as employees treated unfairly, tend to develop tension and subsequently withdraw in the amount of effort towards work while others quit (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002). In relation to the study on assessing factors affecting employee performance, unfair treatment such as discrimination, victimization, and sidelining creates tension among employees as such employees feel not part of the organization but tend to belong to small groups within the organization based on the perceived similar equity or inequities. Employees consider the work setup to be a source of satisfaction or punishment as such managers as tasked to create a work setup that will encourage commitment to organizational goals and create opportunities for employees to be creative, (Ibid). This theory is relevant to this study; it will help establish how the work setup and treatment of employees through motivation, working conditions and management styles affect employees' performance.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

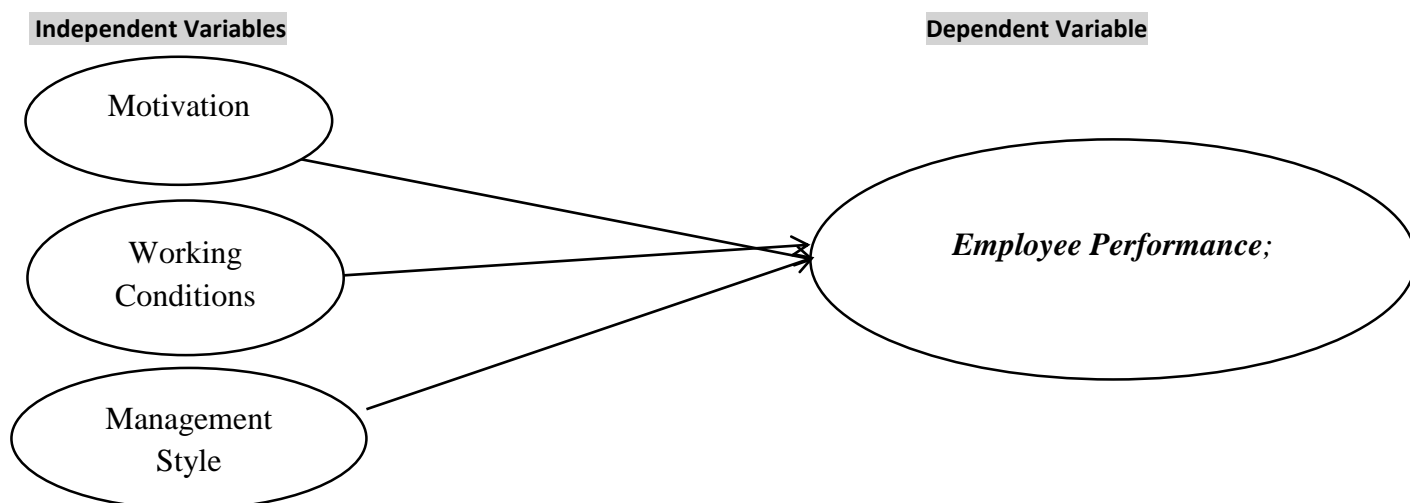


Figure 1: Study's Conceptual framework

Source: Authors Construction (2023)

As shown in **figure 1** above, aligned to the study are three independent variables guiding the study; Motivation, Working Conditions, and Management Style. Motivation is generally concerned with why people behave in a particular way; the direction and persistence of action towards achieving set goals. Just as organizations have different goals, employees working towards achieving organizational goals are different and can be motivated differently as what motivates one employee cannot work for the other as such management should develop a skill to identify what drives each employee to work towards the desired goals. Working conditions constitute the working environment and the employee conditions of service/employment; work activities, training and skills, health, safety and working hours. Working environment consists of employees' safety, job security, good relations among co-workers, recognition and employee motivation as well as participation of employees in decision making processes, (Spector, 1997). Management styles refer to the various ways of decision making and superior subordinate relationships in an organization. According to Prasetya and Kato (2011), management styles aim at enhancing employee performance in an organization. The type management style adopted by managers will determine the attainment of organizational goals through enhanced performance, (Rizwan et al, 2016). This is consistent with the goal setting theory which states that when management sets clear goals with rewards attached to these goals, employees are motivated to attain the goals. The framework assumes that if the organizational goals have to be attained, the style of management adopted should be inclusive, with proper tier of hierarchy and information flow. There must be a proper performance management system which clearly states the goals and incentives attached with well-established working conditions for employees to easily undertake their tasks. This results into Job Satisfaction among employees and ultimately leads to good employee performance.

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3 METHODOLOGY

A mixed method approach was used with questionnaires and scheduled interviews as data collection tools. A census was used to derive the total target population of 93 employees. Stratified sampling technique was utilized where 93 respondents were administered with questionnaires while 11 respondents were selected for qualitative data collection through interviews. The study utilized a descriptive approach to quantitative data analysis through the use of SPSS while qualitative data was themed for content analysis. A descriptive research was appropriate because it helps acquire precise profile of occurrence and individuals. Therefore, it is vital to help explore the relationships of the independent variables to the dependent variable in this case employee performance (Saunders et al., 2019). Ethical measures were undertaken to ensure the validity and reliability of data collected.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Effects of Motivation on Employee Performance

Since the early 2000s, decentralization has been adopted as a vital policy for the development of Zambia as a Country which led to the enactment of the 2019 Local Government Act subsequent to the creation of new districts in 2011 as such it would be expected that most of these districts especially Lukulu District would have greatly developed with time. The study was interested to understand the level of motivation received by Lukulu Town Council employees to perform exceptionally and achieve developmental goals. Results revealed that majority of the employees had received little to no performance feedback after annual performance appraisals conducted by their supervisors; 87% has never received any form of training, 90% had not received any form of mentorship. Despite failure to achieve targets due to lack of tools, 72% experienced challenges with working tools, 90% had no team building activities and 73% had no career development opportunities. A summary of the findings indicate that of the 100% census, 3.3% males and 2.2% were encouraged and motivated to perform better while 52% males and 42% females were demotivated.

4.2 Effect of Working Conditions on Employee Performance

Employee responded to statements on the Likert scale and the findings revealed that respondents at 35.6% agreed that organizations' office space is enough and conducive for operations. However, 91.1% (50%, 41.1%) of the respondents disagreed and cited the institution for failure to provide employees with protective clothing with emphasis on waste management employees, 46.7% strongly disagreed with the statement that Lukulu Town Council had enough furniture, tools, and equipment to undertake assigned tasks. Similarly, 72% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the organization paid overtime for extra working hours. Majority of the respondents at 48.9% chose to be neutral by neither agreeing nor disagreeing to the institution having deliberate policies against discriminatory practices while 77% agreed to existing policies aimed at curbing verbal and physical abuse. Further, results revealed that there was no clear stance on the ability by the organization to embrace diversity through policy framework as majority of the respondents at 88% opted to be neutral by not confirming the existence of the policy frame with confirmation at 1% and 11% disapproval. The majority (40%) agreed with the assertion that the institution provides clean drinking water. Furthermore, 39% depicting the majority, disagreed with the statement that local authority's compensation structure is harmonized and promotes equity.

4.3 Effect of Management Style on Employee Performance

Results to Likert scale statements on the style of management at Lukulu Town Council revealed that majority of the respondents (55.6%) agreed that decisions are entirely made by management personnel without consultation or engagement of lower management employees. Similarly, 71.1% of the employees strongly agreed to the assertion that management does not allow the use of initiative and creativity to solve problems. Further, 58.9% of the employees opined that decision making and information is centralized; management does not consult middle, lower, and support staff instead 58.9% employees agreed that management demands subordinates to always act as instructed. Majority of the employees at 41.1% disagreed to the notion that management clearly communicates its goals to the employees while 36.7% of the respondents had no freedom to make decisions related to their tasks. 52.2% expressed neutrality to the assertion that management never reveals information to employees. 68.9% felt unappreciated as they strongly agreed that management always took credit for their achievements and contributions. 58.9% of the employees at Lukulu Town Council strongly agreed to the statement that management lacks uniformity in handling employee matters, it treats employees differently.

Interviews were conducted across the strata of hierarchy and the study reviewed that there was no proper performance management system resulting in limited feedback and incentives. Further, the submissions revealed that *"employee performance was greatly affected by the poor work conditions as employees are not motivated to carry out tasks diligently due to lack of proper*

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tools, equipment and protective wear.” Other interviewees felt not part of the organization as they were less informed with little or no say with regards to staff matters such that any attempts to address the unfair treatment was deemed as insubordination. While other key informants at expressed low levels of morale to perform tasks due to bureaucratic process such that even when initiative was applied to achieve the intended results, the credit was awarded to superiors.

5. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

5.1 Effects of Motivation on Employee Performance

The study found out that among the assessed prominent performance based employee motivation techniques/indicators, namely; rewards, recognition, training and development, coaching, mentorship, team building activities, salary increment, and career development opportunities had 83% of the workforce expressing deprivation of these indicators ranging from disagree to strongly disagree. This entails high levels of dissatisfaction in relation to performance indicators such as target achievement, consistency in task completion, quality of work and efficiency. The study did not find any evidence on efforts to motivate employees because the institution lacked a sound performance management system , - a very vital tool for goal setting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This clearly entails little or no feedback was given to the employees in form of intrinsic and extrinsic incentives due to lack of key performance indicators to measure. Mullins (2005) argues that motivation can be classified into two categories; extrinsic motivation, related to ‘tangible’ rewards such as salary and fringe benefits, security, promotion, contract of service, the work environment and conditions of work. Such tangible rewards are often determined at the organizational level and may be largely outside the control of individual managers. Intrinsic motivation is related to ‘psychological’ rewards such as the opportunity to use one’s ability, a sense of challenge and achievement, receiving appreciation, positive recognition, and being treated in a caring and considerate manner. Psychological rewards can usually be determined by the actions and behavior of managers, (Ibid).

The researcher went further to ascertain whether there existed rewards and incentives that were not performance based by scrutinizing a number of 59 motivating factors and possible actions undertaken by the organization which were likely to increase employee satisfaction and ultimately motivate them to perform better. However, results revealed that majority at 86.7% of the employees had not received any form of training, 100% of the employees had no mentorship programs, 71.7% had no work tools and equipment, 90% of the employees had never experienced any team building activities, 74.4% had never been coached before, 72.2% had no career development opportunities and 100% had not received any salary increment. The findings; lack of motivation affects employee performance at Lukulu Town Council are consistent with Bateman and Snell (2007), who established that Motivation is fundamental to employee behavior both in private and public organizations; motivation has a great influence on employee’s loyalty, good citizenship and job performance of high output and high quality. Furthermore, motivated employees are more committed to their organizations and show less insubordination, grievance and are creative, innovative and responsive to customers, thus contributing to the success of the organization, (Jurkiewicz et al, 1998).

More recent studies echo similar findings; employees have different needs which once satisfied will affect work positively such as the mere need for recognition to produce quality work (Ciabanu et al., 2019). The findings confirm the assertions of the goal setting theory which states; ambiguous goals and rewards compromise the performance of employees in an organization. Evidently, performance indicators reviewed that as opposed to the 100% score target set for 2022 in the 2021 annual budget, the current scorecard depicted a demotivated workforce with above 20% under performance as compared to 2021. For instance, employee performance regarding road maintenance stood at 35% while out of a total of 28 projects for the year 2022, only 5 projects were 100% done as at June 2023 while the remaining 13 projects were either at mobilization stage, contract awarding stage, at 20% and 40% done respectively. The highlighted poor statistical performance was attributed to poor attitude by the employees to supervise works and report actual findings on site after contract awarding stage. Good work attitude, on the contrary entails timely supervision of works and a comprehensive report of substandard works to ensure timely contract termination for undeserving contractors and awarding other deserving contractors for continuity and timely completion of projects. For instance, as stipulated in the 2021 budget, the timeframe for the fencing of the dumpsite is 6 months to 1 year, however the project was not completed by 31st May, 2023 (Dick, 2021). The findings are in line with studies by Bonjnec and Tomsic (2020) who concluded that there is a positive relationship between employee motivation and labor performance.

5.2 Effects of Working Conditions on Employee Performance

Lukulu Town Council 2022 budget, the department of Human Resource and Administration set to acquire office furniture, work tools and electronic equipment such as slashers, hoes, computers, printers among others in order to maximize employee performance compared to the preceding year. The findings revealed that despite having recruited 8 general workers at the

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Institution, performance indicators such as target achievement, consistency in task completion, efficiency and quality of work were poor for instance 60% of work surroundings were unkempt, the toilets were 60% unpleasant and office cleanness stood at 70% (LTMC/03/02/2023). Additionally, council had erected a total of the 80 street lights in 2021 with the view of achieving the targeted 180 streetlights across the central business district by 2022. However, findings revealed that the council had erected the remaining 180 streetlights and budgeted only for 40% of the erected streetlights were not operational due to lack of maintenance. Similarly, garbage collection for the year 2022 was set at 100% collection rate as compared to the 60% achieved collection rate in 2021. To the contrary, garbage collection stood at 50% as at 2023. These findings clearly reflect the views of the workforce through their responses as tabulated in the findings; majority of the responses to statements on working conditions were unsatisfactory; 50% lacked protective clothing, 47% lacked tools and equipment, 72% worked overtime without compensation, 61% regarded the compensation structure as not harmonized and 51% revealed agreed to the non-existence of deliberate policies against discriminatory practices. These findings reflect the arguments of Adams' equity theory, as he stressed on the importance of justice and fairness at workplaces. It is evident that some employees at Lukulu Town Council feel unfairly treated and discriminated due to lack of protective clothing, lack of tools and equipment, lack of office space and office furniture as such have subsequently withdrawn their efforts towards work leading to poor performance at the council. Niemela et al., (2002) state that good working conditions among them; the design of the office enhance morale among employees to perform better. Based on the results of a pre-survey conducted by researchers, the aforementioned undesirable working conditions are among the main factors leading to employee under performance (Laraswati et al., 2020).

5.3 Effects of Management Style on Employee Performance

Leadership is among the most important factors in influencing employee performance. This is evident on the respondents' views; 70% of the respondents stated that management does not clearly communicate the goals to employees, 62% denied being consulted by management on various matters, 82% of the respondents expressed displeasure with the tendency of management taking credit for the achievement and contributions with recognition of the actual staff, 59% of the respondents strongly agreed to management lacking uniformity in handling employee matters. Based on the results, majority (75%) of the employees confirmed that the autocratic style of management at Lukulu Town Council affected the performance of employees. It is evident that performance indicators such as absenteeism, task completion, work desertion and target achievement are below par. Prior to the appointment of the new management in 2022, Lukulu Town Council had never recorded cases of summary dismissal due to work desertion, high levels of absenteeism and poor work quality. Employee performance with regards to target achievement through work plans was arguably at 80% as compared to the now where employees fail to achieve their daily tasks such as cleaning the surroundings. Since 2022, the council has recorded 5 cases of dismissal and 4 cases of employee turnover (LTC/02/04/2023). It can, therefore, be said that employees have withdrawn towards their daily targets thus ultimately affecting employee performance as narrated by one of the key informants. "An attempt to address discriminatory practices by management is termed as insubordination." According to Wachira et al., (2017), authoritarian leaders have a centralized decision making process thus decide what and how work will be done. These leaders barely trust their subordinates and entirely believe that the way to motivate employees is through rewards at the expense of their attitude towards the general workforce as such employee have no loyalty for their leaders and tend to withdraw their efforts towards work so as to ensure that their leaders ultimately fail and are removed from office (Veliu et al., 2017). The quality of leadership through supervision is vital to employee performance and retention. Inclusiveness through key consultations and creating a favorable atmosphere for employees to air their grievances and the ability to value and capture contributions and efforts of workers is key for exceptional employee performance. Studies reveal that employees are crucial in developing organizational creativity and innovation (Bojnec & Tomsic, 2020). "Today's successful leaders involve their followers in management, which holds the employee accountable for their work, and motivates them to achieve the goals of the organization" (Steinmann et al., 2018). The results are in line with the findings by Chowdhury (2014) in his study on the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation and commitment. Similarly, Martorana & Owens (2003) in their studies suggest that the role of leadership is vital organizational performance. Similarly, the findings agree with Obiwuru et al (2012) who stated that management styles impacts employee performance.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Motivation is a very vital aspect of any organization in pursuing high employee performances and ultimately organizational performance. The study concludes that despite setting clear organizational goals, management lacked proper merit based performance management strategies interlaced with motivation techniques, the creation of a conducive working environment

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through provision of requisite tools for effective performance and proper establishment of both vertical and horizontal work relationships between superiors and subordinates for effective communication. The importance of good working conditions to achieve high performance in a work place cannot be over-emphasized. The working conditions at the subject matter institution negatively influences the performance of employees and as such, it is imperative that management explores intrinsic factors of motivation as monthly salaries are not sufficient motivators as the study revealed that employee performance is also determined by the type of working conditions they are subjected to.

6.2 Recommendations

As a curative measure to the findings herein, the study strongly recommends the establishment of reward based performance management systems with measurable key performance indicators to accord feedback to the employees along with the need to invest in employee health and safety through provision of well-ventilated office space, personal protective equipment and other working tools. There must be deliberately established systems of top-bottom communication to create a sense of belonging and promote inclusiveness in decision making for employees at production level through necessary key consultations and performance feedback.

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