

Work Environment and Employee Performance in Government Parastatals in Uganda: A Case Study of National Water and Sewerage Corporation Branches - Wakiso District

Rutaro Denis¹, Evelyn Hope Kyokunda², Rutaro Abas³

1 A Master of Science in Finance Student, Team University (TU), Kampala, Uganda

E-mail: denisrutaro79@gmail.com

2 Lecturer, School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University (TU), Kampala, Uganda

E-mail: evelynhopek@gmail.com

3 Lecturer, School of Graduate Studies and Research, Team University (TU), Kampala, Uganda

E-mail: rutaro1982@gmail.com

Abstract: This study set out to determine the relationship between work environment and employee performance in government parastatals, a case study of NWSC Branches-Wakiso District. Specifically; to establish the relationship between work policy and employee efficiency, to find out the correlation between employee facilitation and employee attendance, and to establish the relationship between supervisor support and meeting work targets in NWSC Branches -Wakiso District. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to study a sample of 81 employees and five (5) Human Resource Managers. The sample was selected using stratified random and purposive sampling techniques respectively. Data was collected using self-administered structured questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and documentary reviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26.0). Qualitative data were analyzed using content and thematic analysis. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to determine the relationships between the variables. The study established a very low significant negative correlation between work policy and employee efficiency ($r = -.292^{**}$, $p < 0.01$) leading to the acceptance of research hypothesis H1. The study further established that there is a high significant positive correlation between employee facilitation and employee attendance ($r = .844^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), and a moderate significant positive correlation between supervisor support and meeting performance targets by the employees ($r = .590^{**}$, $p < 0.01$) leading to the acceptance of respective research hypotheses H1, H2 and H3. It was concluded that maintaining the current work policy would continue to reduce employee efficiency, while improving on employee facilitation would improve employee attendance, that improving on supervisor support would improve the ability of employees to meet their performance targets. The study recommended revision of work policy, improving employee facilitation and supervisor support to enhance employee performance.

Keywords— work; environment; employee; performance;

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The conception of employee performance was originally developed from the study by Elton Mayo in the late 1920s and early 1930s at Chicago, a Western Electric Company plant called Hawthorne. The result of the study brought to light that the working behaviors of workers can be impacted by their sentiments that are shaped by the work environment (Chandrasekar, 2011). Social interactions along with psychological elements were highlighted as the core bases of contentment with one's job performance (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003) and since then, employee performance has become the pillar on which employees are rated and retained in the organisation. The most important goal among others of an organization is to exhaust the possibilities of getting the best employee performance to accomplish set organizational objectives of which organizational performance is at the forefront (Butler & Rose, 2011). The working environment is one of the most crucial factors which influence the level of satisfaction as well as employee motivation which ultimately drives their performance and that of the organisation (Wei, Sewell, Woody, & Rose, 2018).

However, even after the 1990s, when most economies have been liberalized to streamline the work environment and enhance work performance issues, employees performance has remained a significant concern in developing countries and particularly in Africa where human resource management (HRM)-related issues have traditionally been given less attention (Kamoche, 2011). Moreover, employee work performance studies in Africa have focused mainly on Multinational Companies because their HRM policy has largely been formulated in their 'Western' headquarters (Kamoche, Debrah, Horwitz, & Muuka, 2003). The concern for the well-being and employee performance in Multinationals operating in Africa has persisted, although the focus has now shifted from 'Western-based firms to multinationals from the emerging economies of China, India, South Africa, and Brazil for, for example, Cooke, Wood and Horwitz (2015).

In sub-Saharan Africa, several publications that have attempted to address the working environment and institutional issues that affect employee performance have grown exponentially in the last few years. Leading scholars in

this area such as Jackson (2015) and Wood and Horwitz (2015) and Turyasingura and Nabaho (2021) have called for a deeper analysis of what transpires in day today's life as regard working environment if the desired employee performance and ultimate organizational goals are to be attained. This study addressed this gap (contextual) by seeking to examine what happens between the work environment and employees' work performance in parastatal organizations.

National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) is a Public Utility Company established in 1972 under Decree No.34., and is fully owned by the Government of Uganda. At its inception, the Corporation operated in three (3) major towns of Kampala, Jinja, and Entebbe, but now it has coverage in two hundred fifty-six (256) towns countrywide. The laws were revised in 1995 by the NWSC Statute and later on, the statute was incorporated into the Laws of Uganda as CAP 317 (Laws of Uganda 2000). The primary aim of this was to revise the objectives; powers and structure of NWSC to enable the Corporation to operate and provide Water & Sewerage Services in areas entrusted to it on a sound commercial and viable basis (NWSC, 2019).

National Water and Sewerage Corporation service delivery networks currently extend over 1400Kms of piped water per annum, as compared to the 80kms per annum before 2013. NWSC promises to reach everyone with clean safe water within a radius of 200 meters in all the towns and urban centers in Uganda. The Corporation is currently at 78% service coverage committed to reaching the milestone of 100% in the foreseeable future (NWSC, 2019). According to its 2015 annual report, it innovates and manages business prudently on a sound, managerial and viable basis to the delight of customers by a delighted workforce.

Despite the achievements, employees on the ground at NWSC - branches Wakiso seem to work otherwise. There is a strong public concern about employees' performance citing relaxed attention to the public calling regarding water-related emergencies such as breakdowns in the sewage system, untimely billing of customers, and ruthless water cutoffs without notifying the customers through disconnection orders despite this being a company policy, no water / intermittent supply cases (Office of the Auditor General, 2017). In addition, the employees are characterized by late coming and absenteeism as noted that sometimes services cannot be delivered immediately due to the untimely absence of some field staff (Agaba, 2019).

Anecdotal evidence indicates reluctance in employee performance is associated with the work environment and particularly the reluctance of work policy on employees remuneration, employees working hours, and work orientation, which has led to inefficiencies such as have affected employees' attendance that has ultimately resulted in late reporting, less employee concentration on work and early employee departure leave from work, while poor work facilitation is reported to have led to inefficiencies such as the late resolution of issues relating to water leakages and bursts,

rehabilitation of the distribution network, and inefficiencies in the distribution and collection of water bills.

It is further highlighted that NWSC branches in Wakiso district are characterized by weak supervisor support that does not specify employees' roles, identify employees' training needs, and employees coordination which has led to a decline in customer service delivery leading to a reduction in customers satisfaction, late payment of their water bills and increased illegal connections witnessed an increase in non-water revenue by 7.2% in the last two years since 2019 (Agaba, 2019; MWE Water Sector Report, 2020). Despite this employees' performance status, empirical evidence on the relationship between work environment and employee performance in NWSC-Branches particularly in Wakiso District has not been substantiated. It is against this background that the researcher went to the field to study the relationship between work environment and employee performance in government parastatals taking a case study of NWSC Branches.

Statement of the Problem

A conducive work environment composed of a clear and effective work policy, work incentives, and supervisor support increases employee drive to work and hence employee performance (Steen, 2019). Employees in National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) branches of Wakiso District have recently demonstrated poor performance through work inefficiencies such as delays in addressing leakages and bursts, inadequate rehabilitation of water distribution network, delays in distribution and collection of water bills, failure to meet the targets and high levels of non-revenue water which is reported at 32.5% in 2018 compared to the developing countries best practice of 20% (Agaba, 2019; Auditor General's Report, 2019). Partly, this has led to customers' loss of morale in paying their water bills in the time leading to ruthless disconnections by employees without notification through disconnection orders. This has ultimately led to further customer frustrations who have in turn resorted to employing unauthorized private plumbers to restore connections thus leading to further loss of revenue by the organisation which rose to 40% in 2020 compared to 32.8% in 2019 (MWE Water Sector Report, 2020).

In addition, the organisation continues to emphasize employees' time of arrival and departure, employees facilitation both for projects, office work, and field work and improved monitoring through enriched supervisor support by increasing bonuses for field supervision teams (Bukunya, 2020). This questioned the relationship between the work environment and employee performance in the organisation. Unless there are deliberate interventions by NWSC to revert the situation, employee performance might deteriorate further to the detriment of the organisation performance. Although some empirical works that regard employee performance have been conducted in Wakiso District, they have focused more on employee motivation and other factors that influence employee performance in other sectors such as the health and

agriculture (Mugisha, Berg and Muhairwe, 2007; Egaku, 2015; Basaza, 2017; Nabulya, 2018). Empirical works with a specific focus on the working environment and employee performance in the water sector had not been substantiated. Hence this study was undertaken to address these empirical and contextual gaps.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective of the study was to determine the relationship between work environment and employee performance in government parastatals taking a case study of NWSC Branches- Wakiso District.

Specific objectives of the Study

The following specific objectives guided the study:

- i) To establish the relationship between work policy and employee efficiency in NWSC branches - Wakiso District
- ii) To find out the correlation between employee facilitation and employee attendance in NWSC branches -Wakiso District.
- iii) To establish the relationship between supervisor support and meeting performance targets in NWSC branches - Wakiso District.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. A cross-sectional research design was adopted because it enabled the researcher to undertake the study while considering a cross-section of respondents and data at a specified point in time (Voelkle & Hecht, 2017).

Study Population

The study population included five (5) branch Managers and 120 management and technical level employees from five branches of NWSC branches in Waksio District (NWSC, 2019). These branches were Bulenga, Nansana, Kyengera, Wakiso, and Matugga since they are the ones that were identified with characteristics of declining employee performance (Agaba, 2019; Office of the Auditor General, 2020).

Sample Size

A sample of 97 respondents was studied. This sample included both five (5) branch managers and 92 management and technical employees. This sample was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Tables for sample size determination from a given population.

Sampling Techniques

Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used in sample selection for key informants, management, and technical employees respectively. According to Crossman (2020), purposive sampling is preferred in selecting

respondents that hold positions of senior responsibility that allow them to be knowledgeable about issues going on in their areas of jurisdiction. In this study, these people included the branch managers who were identified using the purposive sampling technique. A stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of management and technical employees given that these respondents belonged to different departments and as such, they were divided into respective strata to ensure fair distribution of the samples across those departments (Murphy, 2019). The total target sample of 97 respondents was divided by the number of departments to get the number of respondents that were selected from each department after which random sampling was applied to identify them.

Data Collection Tools and Methods

The choice of data collection method was influenced by the data collection strategy, the type of variable, the accuracy required, the collection point, and the skill of the data collector (Williamson, 2018). The main data collection methods that were used in this study included the self-administer questionnaires, interviews, and desktop review of literature and documents review for secondary statistical data as described below.

Questionnaire

Primary data was collected using an online self-administered structured questionnaire for the data that was analysed quantitatively. A self-administered questionnaire is a research method for collecting information from a selected group of respondents using standardized questions that respondents complete by themselves (Pelissier et al., 2019). A formulated written set of questions that was structured using a five-point Likert scale was used to obtain information about the study as suggested by Amin, (2005). The targeted respondents for the questionnaire survey were management and technical level employees of NWSC branches in Wakiso District. The questionnaire was used based on the fact responses on the variables could not be obtained through methods such as researcher observations since most of the answers to the questions are intrinsic to the respondents themselves.

Interviews

The study used the interview guide to also collect primary data that was analyzed qualitatively. This data was collected from branch managers in NWSC to obtain in-depth information on the study variables since it allowed probing of the key informants for details and clarification of the issues underlying the research problem.

Documentary review

The use of documentary review involved analysis of documents that contained secondary information concerning the study variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hence, this method was used to collect supplementary secondary data from journal articles in form of literature review, newspapers, and company reports.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics in this sub-section are presented, analyzed, and discussed following the sub-variables, namely the working environment (the independent variable), and employee performance (the dependent variable). The analysis is further guided by various sub-dimensions under each major variable and particularly works policy, employee facilitation and supervisor support, the sub-dimensions of the

independent variables, and employee efficiency, employee attendance, and their ability to meet performance targets as measures of employee performance. These variables were measured against a five-point Likert scale defined as; 1- disagree; 2- strongly disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree, considering the mean values. The results concerning these variables are provided in the following sub-sections.

Descriptive statistics on Work policy

Work policy was measured using numerous dimensions indicated in Table 4.3. In the same Table, details of descriptive statistics of these dimensions are presented.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Work Policy

| Work policy dimensions | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| This organisation implements a standard work policy on employees' remuneration | 81 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 |
| This organisation implements a standard work policy on employees' time of reporting | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.48 | 0.50 |
| This organisation implements a standard work policy on employees' departure from work | 81 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| This organisation implements a standard work policy on employee recruitment | 81 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 2.22 | 1.32 |
| This organisation implements a standard work policy on employees orientation | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.26 | 0.44 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the respondents on average disagreed (mean value=2.00) that the organisation implements a standard work policy on employees' remuneration, but agreed (mean value=4.48) that NWSC-Wakiso branches implement a standard work policy on employees' time of reporting. The results in Table 4.3 further reveal that the respondents on average agreed (mean value =4.00) that NWSC-Wakiso branches implement a standard work policy on employee's departure from work, but disagreed (mean value=2.22) that the organisations implement a standard work policy on employee recruitment. In addition, the results in Table 4.3 further indicate that the respondents on average disagreed (mean value=2.29) that NWSC-Wakiso branches.

Key informants' interview findings did not indicate deviations from the above results as they revealed that due to various nature of jobs and contracts, the company does not implement a standard work policy on employees' remuneration as this may not be fair to employees with most challenging tasks. The key informants further affirmed that the policy on the reporting time and time of departure is standard and according to this policy, all the employees of NWSC are expected to report by 7:30 am and leave after 5:00 pm. The key informants, however, stated that there is laxity among employees to adhere to this policy guideline as key informant A stated:

“Despite having work policy guidelines in place, some employees are reluctant to adhere to this policy. For instance, all employees know the reporting and departure time, but some employees report late, others depart before the actual time, while the rest sometimes absent themselves without justifiable reasons”.

This implies the challenge lies with policy implementation. Furthermore, the key informants affirmed the quantitative results by stating that the recruitment and orientation policies change by the nature of the job and departments to allow fairness to employees who work under different conditions in these different jobs and departments.

It is therefore deduced that the strong aspects of work policy at NWSC Wakiso branches are the implementation of flexible policies regarding employees' recruitment, orientation, and remuneration which consider different needs of employees in different departments to allow fairness. The weakness lies with the implementation of the policy on the standard report and departure time which is abused by employees who report late and leave early or even fail to report without reasonable excuses.

Descriptive statistics on Employee Facilitation

Employee work facilitation was measured using numerous dimensions indicated in Table 4.4. In the same Table, details

of descriptive statistics concerning these dimensions are presented.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Facilitation

| Employee Facilitation Dimensions | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| This organization facilitates you with resources for office work | 81 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.26 | 0.44 |
| This organization facilitates you with resources for fieldwork | 81 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.48 | 0.50 |
| This organization facilitates you with resources for project work | 81 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 3.74 | 0.44 |
| The facilitation of the office is always timely | 81 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.00 | 0.72 |
| The facilitation of field work is always timely | 81 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 2.52 | 0.88 |
| The facilitation of project work is always timely | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.26 | 0.44 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.4 indicate that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value=4.26) that the organization facilitates them with resources for office work and also agreed (mean value=3.48) that NWSC-Wakiso branches facilitate them with resources for fieldwork. The results in Table 4.4 further indicate that the respondents on average agreed (mean value = 3.74) that the organization facilitates them with resources for project work, but were neutral and timely (mean value=3.00) that the facilitation for office is always timely. Furthermore, the results in Table 4.4 indicate that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value=2.52) that the facilitation of fieldwork is always timely, and also was neutral (mean value=2.26) that the facilitation of project work is always timely.

Key informants' interview findings did not vary from the above quantitative results as they revealed that it is inevitable that employees are facilitated for all the types of work including office, fieldwork, or project work that NWSC does. However, they affirmed that sometimes facilitation does not come in time due to procedural requirements in the release of

funds from sources, especially the central government contributions. In this regard, Key Informant B clarified:

“Whereas we endeavour to facilitate employees for every type of work be it office, field or project work, we sometimes experience delays in the receipt of funds from sources such as central government due to bureaucratic procedures involved in funds processing. This adversely affects employees’ facilitation to some extent”.

Building on the results, it is deduced that the strong aspect of employee facilitation is that the organization activates employees on all fronts of their work including office work, fieldwork, and project work. The underlying issue is the lack of timeliness of the facilitation which is sometimes late and hence may hinder employee work performance.

Descriptive statistics on Supervisor Support

Supervisor support was measured using various dimensions indicated in Table 4.5. In the same Table, details of descriptive statistics concerning these dimensions are presented.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for Supervisor Support

| Dimensions of supervisor support | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | StD. Dev. |
|--|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| Your supervisor endeavours to clarify roles expected of you. | 81 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 3.86 | 0.44 |
| Your supervisor effectively coordinates your roles with those of the rest of the employees | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.26 | 0.44 |
| Your supervisor regularly monitors your performance | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.28 | 0.40 |
| Your supervisor regularly provides feedback on what he or she wants to be done correctly. | 81 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.20 | 0.00 |
| Your supervisor often listens and reports your complaints to top management. | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.48 | 0.50 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.5 indicate that the respondents on average agreed (mean value=3.86) that the supervisor endeavours to clarify roles expected of them, and also agreed

(mean value=2.48) that the supervisor effectively coordinates their roles with those of the rest of the employees. The results in Table 4.5 further indicate that the respondents on average agreed (mean value = 4.26) that the supervisor regularly monitors their performance, but disagreed (mean value =2.20) that the supervisor regularly provides feedback on what it wanted to be done correctly. Lastly, the results in Table 4.5 show that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value=2.48) and that the supervisor often listens to and reports your complaints to top management.

Key informants' interview findings indicated that there is a smooth relationship between employees and supervisors as they affirmed the clarity of the roles by supervisors to their employees based on the reports and feedback from the supervisors and minimal employee complaints. However, the key informants also complained about delayed feedback from the supervisors, and failure by the supervisors to frequently listen and report employees' complaints to top management. In this respect, Key Informant C stated thus:

“Sometimes the supervisors provide us with feedback about employees' complaints very late which makes our interventions to address those issues equally late

which ultimately affects employees' performance”

Hence it is deduced from the findings that the strong aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches are supervisors' ability to clarify roles to the subordinates, their ability to effectively coordinate the roles of employees, and regular monitoring of employees' performance. The weak aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches are supervisors' irregularity in providing feedback on what supervisors want to be done correctly, and failure by the supervisors to frequently listen and report employees' complaints to top management.

Descriptive statistics on Employee Performance

Employee performance at NWSC Wakiso branches was measured using three (3) sub-dimensions. These include employee efficiency, employee attendance, and their ability to meet performance targets. The deceptive starts concerning these dimensions are presented and in discussed in the following subsections:

Employee efficiency

Five sub-dimensions were used to measure employee efficiency at NWSC Wakiso branches. These dimensions and their respective descriptive statistics are provided in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for employee efficiency

| Employee efficiency dimensions | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| You always work with minimum errors. | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.26 | 0.44 |
| You always meet the deadline of summiting reports | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 3.23 | 0.41 |
| You always resolve issues on their desk very fast | 81 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| You always execute your field tasks very fast | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 3.18 | 0.50 |
| You always execute work at a minimum cost to the organisation | 81 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.6 show that the respondents on average agreed (mean value=4.26) that they always work with minimum errors, but were neutral (mean value=3.23) that they always meet the deadline of summiting reports. The results in Table 4.6 further indicate that the respondents on average agreed (mean value = 4.00) that they always resolve issues on their desk very fast, but were neutral (mean value =3.18) that they always execute field tasks very fast. Lastly, the results in Table 4.6 show that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value=3.00) and that they always execute work at a minimum cost to the organisation.

Key informants' interview findings affirmed that the employees are keen on minimizing errors during their operations as the reported ones in a given period are minimal. The key informants further acknowledged lateness in the submission of reports by employees at times which affirms that employees sometimes do not meet the reporting deadlines. While the key informants affirmed the position

that issues on the desk are often resolved very fast as they are always under tight supervision from supervisors and managers who sit with the majority of these employees on the same office floor, they indicated laxity in resolving field tasks as customer complaints about field operations of employees are sometimes very many in a given period. In this regard, key informant D clarified thus:

“Employees efficient at NWSC is moderate. While office employees respond to customer complaints in time, issues often emerge with field employees that do not attend to customer issues in due time”

Building on the findings, it is deduced that the strong aspects of employee efficiency at NWSC-Wakiso branches are minimisation of work errors, and expedited resolution of desk issues advanced by customers. The weaknesses in employee efficiency lie with failure by the employees to always meet the reporting deadlines, laxity of field workers to resolve customers' issues, and execution of organisational

activities at relatively higher unjustified costs by the employees.

Employee Attendance

Five sub-dimensions were used to measure employee attendance at NWSC Wakiso branches. These dimensions and their respective descriptive statistics are provided in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Attendance

| Employee Attendance Dimensions | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| You always attend to all calls that come to your desk on time | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 4.74 | 0.44 |
| You never fail to report to duty every time | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.26 | 0.42 |
| You never report late for work at any time | 81 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 |
| You spend the maximum number of hours at the work place | 81 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 2.78 | 0.84 |
| You issue customers' bills regularly | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.26 | 0.44 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.7 demonstrate that the respondents on average agreed (mean value=4.74) that they always attend to all calls that come to their desk in time, but disagreed that (mean value=2.26) they never fail to report to duty every time. The results in Table 4.7 further indicate that the respondents on average disagreed (mean value = 2.00) that they never report late for work at any time, but were neutral (mean value =2.78) that they spend the maximum number of hours at the workplace. Lastly, the results in Table 4.6 show that the respondents on average agreed (mean value=4.26) that they issue customers' bills regularly

Key informants' interview findings affirmed that the employees' regular attendance to their calls as they indicated that they never receive complaints concerning so, but affirmed that employees sometimes do not report to duty every time and in some cases without management knowledge. Similarly, key informants affirmed the late reporting of employees in some cases although they attributed this to well-known reasons such as traffic jam and bad weather, especially for employees who use public means of transport. In addition, the key informants affirmed that employees sometimes do not spend the maximum number of hours at the workplace citing cases of field workers who sometimes leave the office early even if they are not going to the field, and also affirmed that employees are very prompt

when it comes to the distribution of water bills as they have not got complaints in this regard. In this respect, key informant E stated thus:

“Issues of employee attendance are often associated with field and project based employees due to poor supervision and monitoring. Office based employees are closely monitored and hence issues of attendance are very limited in this work perspective”

Based on the findings, it is deduced that the strong aspects of employee attendance at NWSC-Wakiso branches are attendance to all calls that come to their desk in time, and regular and customers. The weak aspects of employee attendance are a failure by the employees to report to duty on time in some cases, failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, and failure by the employees to spend the maximum number of hours at the workplace.

Meeting Performance Targets

Five sub-dimensions were used to measure employees' positions in meeting performance targets at NWSC Wakiso branches. These dimensions and their respective descriptive statistics are provided in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics on Meeting Performance Targets

| Meeting Performance Targets Dimensions | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|--|----|------|------|------|-----------|
| Your manager/supervisor sets your targets in line with organizational objectives | 81 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| You are involved by your manager/supervisor in setting your targets | 81 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.26 | 0.44 |
| You always meet your daily targets | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.48 | 0.50 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|------|------|------|------|
| You always meet your weekly targets | 81 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 |
| You always meet your monthly targets | 81 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.74 | 0.44 |
| You always meet your annual targets | 81 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.22 | 0.42 |

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.8 show that the respondents on average agreed (mean value=4.00) that their manager/supervisors set their targets in line with organizational objectives, but disagreed that (mean value=2.26) that are involved their managers/supervisors in setting performance targets. The results in Table 4.8 further indicate that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value = 2.48) that they always meet their daily targets, and were also neutral (mean value=3.00) that they always meet their weekly targets. The results in 4.8 further indicate that the respondents on average were neutral (mean value= 2.74) that they always meet their monthly targets, but agreed (mean value=4.22) that they always meet their annual targets.

Key informants' interview findings affirmed that the managers/ supervisors set target for the subordinates regularly, and also affirmed that sometimes these targets are not set in the presence of the subordinates arguing that sometimes it may not be necessary. Furthermore, the key informants revealed that most employees do not often meet their daily, weekly, or monthly targets, but are efficient in meeting their annual targets implying that they do better with long-term targets than a short term to medium targets. In this regard, key informant F expressed:

“While the managers and supervisors set employees targets regularly, it is a little challenging for the employees to meet daily, weekly or monthly target. However, they have demonstrated ability in meeting annual work targets”

It is therefore deduced that the strong aspects of meeting performance targets by the employees at NWSC Wakiso branches are managers/supervisors' setting of employees' target, and employee's ability to meet the annual targets. The weak aspect is supervisors not involving employees in setting targets which explains why often employees do not meet their short-term and intermediate targets. Failure to involve

employees in target setting may lead to difficulty in their attainment as resources allocated may not be commensurate with what employees need to meet such targets. But once employees are fully involved in setting targets, resources and time can be accurately estimated and hence facilitate the attainment of the set targets.

Relationship between work Environment and Employee Performance

The general objective of the study was to determine the relationship between work environment and employee performance in government parastatals taking a case study of NWSC-Wakiso District Branches. To attain these objectives, it was disintegrated into three specific objectives. These objectives were; to establish the relationship between work policy and employee efficiency, find out the correlation between employee facilitation and employee attendance, and to establish the relationship between supervisor support and meeting work targets in NWSC-Wakiso District. Ultimately, three research hypotheses were formulated for empirical testing. The hypotheses are stated as H1: There is a significant relationship between the work policy and employee performance in NWSC-Wakiso District, H2: There is a significant relationship between employee facilitation and employee performance in NWSC-Wakiso District, and H3: There is a significant relationship between supervisor support and meeting work targets in NWSC-Wakiso District. The results concerning the study objectives and the study hypotheses provided in the following subsections are interpreted wuch that a value less than zero denotes a negative association, while a value greater than zero denotes a positive relationship. No correlation exists between the two variables being compared when the value is zero (Afifi et al., 2019). The correlation coefficient's value varies between +1 and -1 depending on how strong the association is (Sheugh and Alizadeh, 2015). For additional explanation of correlation coefficients, see Table 4.8.

Table 4.9: Interpretation of the strength for the Pearson Correlation Coefficient

| Size and direction of Correlation | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 0.90 to 1.0 (-0.90 to -1.00) | Very high positive (negative) correlation |
| 0.70 to 0.90 (-0.70 to -0.90) | High positive (negative) correlation |
| 0.50 to 0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70) | Moderate positive (negative) correlation |
| 0.30 to 0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50) | Low positive (negative) correlation |
| 0.00 to 0.30 (0.00 to -0.30) | Very low positive (negative) correlation |

Source: Sheugh and Alizadeh (2015).

The decision on whether the relationships between the variables are significant or not was made by comparing ideal level of significance (p-values) and the calculated p-values at 1% and 5% levels of significance. Significant correlations exist when the calculated p-values are less than the ideal p-values. Otherwise, the relationships are not significant.

Relationship between the work policy and employee efficiency in NWSC-Wakiso District

The relationship between work policy and employee efficiency was determined using Pearson correlation coefficients. The results are summarized in Table 4.9.

Table 4.10: Correlations between work policy and employee efficiency

| Variables | | Work policy | Employee efficiency |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Work policy | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.292** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .008 |
| | N | 81 | 81 |
| Employee efficiency | Pearson Correlation | -.292** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .008 | |
| | N | 81 | 81 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.10 show that there is a very low negative relationship between work policy and employee efficiency ($r=-0.292^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H1 is accepted. This implies that maintaining the current work policy would continue to negatively influence employee efficiency.

Relationship between the employee facilitation and attendance in NWSC-Wakiso District Branches

The relationship between employee facilitation and employee attendance was determined using Pearson correlation coefficients. The results are summarized in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Correlations between employee facilitation and attendance

| Variables | | Employee facilitation | Employee attendance |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Employee facilitation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .844** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 81 | 81 |
| Employee attendance | Pearson Correlation | .844** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 81 | 81 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.11 show that there is a high positive significant relationship between employee facilitation and employee attendance ($r=0.844^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H2 is accepted. The results imply that improving employee facilitation would highly improve on employee attendance.

Relationship between supervisor support and meeting performance targets in NWSC-Wakiso District Branches

The relationship between supervisor support and meeting performance targets was determined using Pearson correlation coefficients. The results are summarized in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Correlations between supervisor support and meeting performance targets

| Variables | | Supervisor support | Meeting performance Targets |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Supervisor support | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .590** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 81 | 81 |
| Meeting Performance Targets | Pearson Correlation | .590** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 81 | 81 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey data (2021)

The results in Table 4.12 indicate that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between supervisors and meeting performance targets by the employees ($r=0.590^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H3 is accepted. The results imply that improving supervisor support would improve employees' ability to meet performance targets.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of findings

The results in Table 4.9 show that there is a significant negative correlation between work policy and employee efficiency ($r=-.292^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H1 is accepted. The results mean that maintaining the current work policy would continue to negatively influence employee efficiency.

The results are attributed to the strong aspects of work policy at NWSC Wakiso branches are the implementation of flexible policies regarding employees' recruitment, orientation and remuneration which consider different needs of employees in different departments to allow fairness. The negative relationship can be attributed to the policy on the standard reporting and departure time which is abused by employees who report late and leave early or even fail to report without reasonable excuses. This affects employees' efficiency and particularly failure by the employees to always meet the reporting deadlines, laxity of field workers to resolve customers' issues and execution of organisational activities at relatively higher unjustified costs by the employees.

The findings contradict those of Ngozi (2015) who established that work policy motivates employee ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, the results contradict those of Pancasila, Haryono and Sulisty (2020) who established that a comprehensive policy that allowed employees to make some decisions was positively related with employee on job satisfaction and employee performance. In addition, the study contradict the findings by Tio (2014) who established that the policy on working hours contributed to high level of employees' productivity.

The contradiction in the findings indicates that the problem lies with the policy at NWSC and particularly, the implementation of the reporting and departure time which is abused by employees. This affects employee's efficiency and particularly, employees' failure to always meet the reporting deadlines, laxity of field workers to resolve customers' issues, and execution of organisational activities at relatively higher unjustified costs by the employees. Therefore, efforts to improve on work policy to enhance work performance should consider the implementation of work policy on employees reporting and departure time.

The study established that there is a significant positive correlation between employee facilitation and employee attendance ($r=.844^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H2 is accepted. The results imply that improving on employee facilitation would improve on employee attendance.

The results are attributed to employee on all fronts of their work including office work, field work and project work. However, there is an issue of employee facilitation that need to be addressed so as to improve their attendance. This is the timeliness of the facilitation which is sometimes late and hence may hinder employee work attendance and particularly failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, and failure by the employees to spend the maximum number of hours at the work place.

The findings concur with the assertion by (Zandberg & Morales, 2019) that employee facilitation enables them to effectively execute their duties. This is because facilitation directs employees' capabilities into more efficiency in their work in an attempt to achieve both their goals and institutional goals. In addition, the absence of adequate facilitation may negatively affect the hardworking employee's performance; it may also weaken their productivity at work which decreases the chances of attaining their goals and those of the organizations they work for (Weatherburn, 2020).

The findings further concur with those of Alfandi and Alkawsaneh (2017) who established that adequate facilitation leads to high job satisfaction, productivity and performance in terms of quality, employees ability to deal with troubles, compliance with rules and regulations and work results. Similarly, the findings concur with those of Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford (2014) who established that explicit facilitation was a strong component of motivation and predictor of performance. Considered simultaneously through meta-analytic regression, motivation through adequate facilitation predicted more unique variance in quality and quantity of performance.

Furthermore, the findings concur with those of Woolley and Fishbach (2015) who established that employees value facilitation more than intrinsic motivational factors. For example, people care more about the level of facilitation in their present work task than of past or future work tasks. Woolley and Fishbach (2015) explained that this shift in valuation occurs because facilitation erases stress during action pursuit enabling employees to meet their targets in time. However, the relationship between these facilitation types was not related with employee performance in terms of efficiency, a conceptual gap that will be addressed by the proposed study. In addition, the findings concur with those of Lee, Propper and Stoye (2019) that medical personnel do react strongly to the adequacy of lab facilitation.

The results in Table 4.11 indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between supervisor and meeting performance targets by the employees ($r=.590^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Hence research hypothesis H3 is accepted. The results imply that improving on supervisor support would improve on employees' ability to meet performance targets.

The results are attributed to the strong aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches are supervisor ability to clarify roles to the subordinates, their ability to effectively coordinate the roles of employees, and regular monitoring of employees' performance. However, improvement is needed in the weak aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso

branches are supervisor's irregularity in providing feedback on what it wanted done correctly, and failure by the supervisors to frequently listen and report employees' complaints to top management.

The findings concur with those of (Qureshi et al., 2018) who established that supervisor support increases employee productivity through meeting their targets and hence greater service and value to customers. This ultimately leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, which promotes profitability and the continued success of the organization. To arrive at these conclusions, Qureshi *et al.* (2018) investigated the role of supervisor support on nurses' job satisfaction in the public hospitals in Sindh province of Pakistan. The results indicated that supervisor support has a significant impact on job satisfaction among nurses in Pakistan leading to higher employee drive to attain their set goals and hence attention to customers, a higher value to the customers and organisation. Considering the context, however, the study was conducted in the nursing profession where more attention and supervisor support are much required compared to the water sector, the context of the current study. Therefore, considering the relationship between the variables in the water sector addressed this contextual gap. The findings further concur with those of McIlroy, *et al.* (2021), who, drawing on Self-Determination Theory, analysed the influence of unanswered supervisor support on employee performance outcomes and concluded that unanswered supervisor support reduces employees' psychological need satisfaction, negatively impacting how they feel, behave, and connect with others, but did not specify its impact on meeting their goals, a conceptual gap that was addressed by the study.

Conclusions

Building on the findings, the following conclusions are made. These are also guided by the study objectives. Based on the findings, it is concluded that maintaining the current work policy would continue to negatively influence employee efficiency. This is especially as regards the policy on the standard reporting and departure time which is abused by employees who report late and leave early or even fail to report without reasonable excuses. This affects employee efficiency in terms of failure by the employees to always meet the reporting deadlines, laxity of field workers to resolve customers' issues, and execution of organizational activities at relatively higher unjustified costs by the employees.

Owing to the study findings, it is concluded that improving employee facilitation would improve employee attendance. The results are attributed to the employee on all fronts of their work including office work, fieldwork, and project work. However, there is an issue of employee facilitation that need to be addressed to improve their attendance. This is the timeliness of the facilitation which is sometimes late and hence may hinder employee work attendance and particularly

failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, and failure by the employees to spend the maximum number of hours at the workplace.

Building on the findings, it is concluded that improving supervisor support would improve employees' ability to meet performance targets. The results are attributed to the strong aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches are the supervisor ability to clarify roles to the subordinates, their ability to effectively coordinate the roles of employees, and regular monitoring of employees' performance. However, improvement is needed in the weak aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches are supervisor's irregularity in providing feedback on what it wanted to be done correctly, and failure by the supervisors to frequently listen and report employees' complaints to top management. This would witness an improvement in meeting their short-term and medium-term targets.

Recommendations

- i. The policy on the standard reporting and departure time is abused by employees who report late and leave early or even fail to report without reasonable excuses. This affects employee efficiency in terms of failure by the employees to always meet the reporting deadlines, laxity of field workers to resolve customers' issues, and execution of organisational activities at relatively higher unjustified costs by the employees.
- ii. Therefore, the organisations need to ensure strict adherence to the reporting and departure policy. This should be done through keeping and regular review of records on employees' arrival and departure times. Punitive actions such as suspension without pay should then be instituted to deter this kind of employees' misconduct.
- iii. The major issue of employee facilitation that needs to be addressed to improve their attendance is the timeliness of the facilitation which is sometimes late. This hinders employee work attendance and particularly failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, failure by the employees to report to duty in time in some cases, and failure by the employees to spend the maximum number of hours at the workplace.
- iv. Thus the timeliness of facilitation both for office work, fieldwork, and project work should be improved by NWSC Wakiso branches to improve employee attendance. This may be done by implementing partial, but progressive facilitation in case resources for full facilitation at once is not available.
- v. Improvement is needed on the weak aspects of supervisor support at NWSC Wakiso branches. These are the supervisors' irregularity in providing feedback on what they want to be done correctly, and failure by the supervisors to frequently listen

and report employees' complaints to top management. This would witness an improvement in meeting their short-term and medium-term targets. Therefore, supervisors should be encouraged to always be clear to employees as regards what needs to be done and to provide timely feedback to employees. This would be practically done by involving employees in setting the goals all the time. Furthermore, the supervisors should always ensure timely reporting of employees' complaints to the managers so that timely solutions are provided to enhance employees' ability to meet their performance targets.

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