



Factors Influencing Community Development Professionals Performance at Workplace in Northern Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2023/v49i31134

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/108113>

Original Research Article

Received: 12/08/2023

Accepted: 19/10/2023

Published: 27/10/2023

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on factors influencing CD professionals' performance in Tanzania with reference to selected local government councils. The role of community development (CD) professionals is basically to assist and facilitate the formulation and implementation of strategic policy interventions by the government to address challenges of service and goods delivery to communities. However, their roles are not well known among the authorities, which causes their work performance and the factors affecting them to not be clearly known. A sample of 80 respondents, which included community development officers (CDOs) and district community development officers (DCDOs), was used. A key informant interview was used to elicit information from government administrators. CDOs and DCDOs were drawn from seven (7) selected district councils, namely Meru, Arusha, Arusha City, Monduli, Hai, Moshi DC, and Moshi MC. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and documentary review, then analyzed using a Likert scale, where statement(s) like most favorable, favorable, neutral, unfavorable, and most

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unfavorable were used to show the favoritism of the factor(s) influencing CD professionals work performance. With the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), descriptive statistics were produced and presented in tabular form. It was found that budget allocation, motivation package, leadership style, work climate, respect for professionalism, and experts positively or significantly influence CD professionals' work performance. This paper recommends that improving factors such as budgetary allocation, favorable work climate, leadership style, motivation package, job autonomy, employee/employer relationships, strategic plans, and career development at work will enhance CD workers' performance and hence improve community well-being.

Keywords: Community development; CD professionals; work performance; Tanzania.

1. INTRODUCTION

Wambua [1] indicates that the role of community development (CD) professionals is basically meant to assist and facilitate the formulation and implementation of strategic policy interventions by the government to address challenges of service and goods delivery to communities. For that matter, therefore, the purpose of CD professionals in the public service is to facilitate the removal of obstacles in the course of providing services to communities by playing an active role in community engagement and mobilization Ballard et al. [2]; Mpembeni, Bhatnagar, and LeFevre et al. [3].

Kawakatsu, Sugishita, and Tsutsui [4] explain that the role of CD professionals in both local and central government services is often less understood or misunderstood by the stakeholders, and as a result, they are underutilized in the course of delivering services like the provision of water and sanitation and other social services such as energy and electricity provision, housing, social security, and others. In essence, CD professionals are meant to facilitate communication between government and communities in order to ensure that services are delivered effectively and efficiently. As a result, their role is often confused with the role of social workers or other similar disciplines [5,3].

Kawakatsu, Sugishita, and Tsutsui [4] further reiterate that at the heart of all community development professions is the set of participatory approaches and serious involvement of communities in bringing about development [6]. CD professionals, like any other professionals functioning in the public service, are facing workplace challenges such as incentive/motivation packages, rule of law, leadership style, teamwork, workplace engagement, accountability, cooperation, collaboration, partnership, participatory decision-making, and congenial workplace culture [6].

Wambua [1] defined community development (CD) as a broad term given to the practices of civic activists, involved citizens, and professionals to build stronger and more resilient local communities. The community development discipline and program seek to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers and/or CD professionals must be enthusiastic, passionate, and sufficiently competent to understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger social institutions (Elvin & Dovhani, 2016).

The twenty-first century community development and management landscape demand or calls for new sets of human competences and new ways of thinking and adapting modern concepts on how to treat workplace employees well, such as community development professionals in particular. "Employees are the most valued organization's assets." [7]. Those times of treating employees as machines have to be abandoned so as to immediately adopt and adapt the demands and dictates of the tenets of modern management theories, concepts, models, and practices, which strongly emphasize treating workplace employees as human beings by guiding and leading through promoting humanistic values at work [7].

Wambua [1] reiterates that community-oriented projects and programs, business, and the political-economic environment today are continuously subjected to and characterized by turbulent and changing forces and opportunities, which actually require managers of the day to act more competently, humanely, quickly, flexibly, and skillfully than any other time before. Thorough and competent application of human skills complemented by technical and conceptual

skills is highly required, and those workplace managers who effectively and efficiently combine the three skills are likely to create and sustain an excellent workplace in which employees and community development professionals in particular will remain committed, dedicated, and mutually responsible for the envisaged national community development goals and strategies [8].

Shava & Dovhani [8] strongly indicate that only motivated and competent community development professionals are able to supervise and guide the development process to ensure it functions and progresses in a manner that is highly inclusive and not discriminatory. A strategic motivation profile focused on these CD professionals is required to guarantee the presence of highly motivated work personnel in the community development process.

Wambua [1] also provides that community development is a fundamental concept, but when it comes to the implementation of the sector in the development process, it is not recognized as a vital profession and should not be utilized to the optimum level to bring desirable socio-economic development in Tanzania. Community development is crucially concerned with the issues of powerlessness and disadvantage; as such, it should involve all members of society and offer a practice that is part of a process of social change.

Shava & Dovhani [8] describe community development as a holistic approach that must take the lead in confronting the attitudes of individuals and the practices of institutions and society as a whole that bring fair development among all people, including women, people with disabilities and different abilities, religious groups, elderly people, and other groups who are disadvantaged in the community. It also must take the lead in countering the destruction of the natural environment on which we all depend. Community development is well placed to involve people equally on these issues, which affect all of us Rogers et al. [9].

Wambua [1] clarifies that the community development process should seek to develop structures that enable the active involvement of all people as primary stakeholders in the development process and issues that affect their lives. It is a process based on the sharing of power, skills, knowledge, and experience within communities of interest as people identify what is

relevant to them. The community development process is collective, but the experience of the process enhances the integrity, skills, knowledge, and experience, as well as equality of power, for each individual who is involved. The motivation and retention of community development employees and their connectedness at work have been shown and proved to be very significant to the development and accomplishment of community development's goals and objectives, as well as the achievement and maintenance of the long-term survival and sustainability of the projects. Unfortunately, as it was remarked and lightly pointed out in the beginning, there is no obvious literature, research projects, or findings specially focused on addressing the motivational side of CD professionals in Tanzania [8].

The study by Odukah [7] reveals that trying to motivate and retain employees within the organization may present other challenges as well. They may demand higher wages, not comply with organization practices, not interact well with their co-workers, or not comply with their managers' directions. Besides these problems, asymmetric information or a lack of information about the employees' performance may complicate an organization's endeavor to retain and motivate important employees. It is argued that without adequate information, the organization may not be able to distinguish productive workers from non-productive ones and important from not-important ones. Employees often may take credit for the successes and attribute failures to other employees and this is what is known as a moral hazard problem. In many instances, companies or management may reward or punish employees for an organizational outcome for which they had no impact or were not solely responsible.

Armstrong (2020) describes that even if an organization is fortunate enough to retain talented employees, the company may still have to cope with agency costs resulting from them and their colleagues. When information about an employee's activities is difficult to gather, the employee may be motivated to act in his own interest, which may diverge from the interests of the organization. This divergence of interests results in costs to the organization in the form of excessive perquisite consumption, shirking of job responsibilities, and poor investment decision-making.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. A sample of 80 respondents was used. Both random and purposive sampling techniques were used to pick and include respondents in the study sample. Random sampling was used to select community development officers (CDOs), while purposive sampling was used to select government administrators from seven (7) district councils, namely Meru, Arusha, Arusha City, Monduli, Hai, Hoshi DC, and Moshi MC. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and documentary review, then analyzed using a Likert scale, where statement(s) like most favorable, favorable, neutral, unfavorable, and most unfavorable were used to show the favoritism of the factor(s) influencing CD professionals work performance. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22, descriptive statistics were used and presented in tabular formats.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The study examined the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on occupation and years spent by the employee in a CD work position, as presented and discussed underneath.

3.1.1 Occupation

It was the intention of the study to examine the occupation of CD workers so as to reveal

whether employees occupying CD work positions possess relevant professions. The findings revealed that most CD workers have relevant CD professions as they are employed as assistant CDOs and CDOs, as shown in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, an average of 49.4 percent of CD workers were employed in relevant CD professions, compared to only 1.30 percent of CD workers who were employed in non-CD professions. These findings suggest that duties and obligations for CD workers have been carried out by professionals. It also indicates that most of the government's employees possess the relevant knowledge and skills required in the CD work profession.

3.1.2 Years spent by employees in CD service position

It was the interest of the study to determine the duration spent by employees in CD service positions. This is because the years spent by the employees in CD work reveal the experience an individual has in the profession. In this case, their experiences helped uncover factors affecting their work performance. In this case, respondents were presented with years spent by employees in CD service positions in four categories and ranges. The findings indicate that the majority (42.5 percent) of respondents have served as CD workers for a period of 1–5 years. It was also realized that 26.30 percent of respondents served as CD workers in a period of 11–20 years, and only 13.8 percent of respondents have spent more than 20 years, as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Present occupation for CD workers

S/No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percent
1.	Assistant Community Development Officer	15	18.80
2.	Community Development Officer	64	80.00
3.	Other Professional than Community Development	1	1.30
	Total	80	100.00

Source: Research findings (2019)

Table 2. Time spent by employees in CD service position

S/No.	Time Spent in CD Service Position	Frequency	Percent
1.	1 -5 years	34	42.50
2.	6 - 10 years	14	17.50
3.	11 - 20 years	21	26.30
4.	Above 20 years	11	13.80
	Total	80	100.00

Source: research findings (2019)

Table 3. Factors affecting work performance for CDOs

S/No.	Factor affecting work performance	Most favorable	Favorable	Neutral	Unfavorable	Most unfavorable
1	Budget	11(13.75%)	7(8.75%)	4(5.00%)	47(58.75%)	11(13.75%)
2	Motivation package	5(6.30%)	18(22.50%)	21(26.30%)	28(35.00%)	8(10.00%)
3	Leadership style	17(21.25%)	24(30.00%)	25(31.25%)	8(10.00%)	6(7.50%)
4	Work Climate	5(6.25%)	5(6.25%)	33(41.25%)	34(42.5%)	3(3.75%)
5	Respect of professionalism and experts	6(7.50%)	13(16.25%)	45(56.25%)	15(18.75%)	1(1.25%)
6	Public service policy	3(3.75%)	12(15.00%)	46(57.50%)	18(22.50%)	1(1.25%)
7	Employee/Employer relationship	6(7.50%)	17(21.25%)	46(57.50%)	7(8.75%)	4(5.00%)
8	Organization structure/reporting relationship	11(13.75%)	43(53.75%)	23(28.75%)	5(6.25%)	4(5.00%)
9	Strategic plans	4(5.00%)	23(28.75%)	37(46.25%)	9(11.25%)	7(8.75%)
10	Employee participation	19(23.75%)	18(22.50%)	32(40.00%)	10(12.50%)	1(1.25%)
11	Job autonomy	9(11.25%)	17(21.25%)	43(53.75%)	11(13.75%)	1(1.25%)
12	Career development	6(7.50%)	16(20.00%)	55(68.75%)	10(12.50%)	2(2.50%)
	Average	7.75(10.63%)	17.75(22.19%)	34.16(42.71%)	16.83(21.04%)	4(5.10%)

Source: Research findings (2019)

The findings in Table 2 suggest that respondents have experience with community development activities and are aware of factors that may inhibit their efforts toward work performance. The use of their experiences can transform the work attitude of community development professionals upon the implementation of their opinions and observations.

3.2 Factors Affecting CDOs Work Performance

The study examined factors affecting work performance for CDOs, and the factors were rated based on scales of their favoritism. Examined factors included budget allocation, motivation package, leadership style, work climate, respect for professionalism and experts, as well as other factors as shown in Table 3. Respondents revealed their opinion on this question; the number of respondents who accepted that these factors are favorable to their work performance ranges between 12.50 and 67.5 percent of the respondents, whereas an average of 46.27 percent of respondents had a neutral orientation on these factors that they either affect or do not have effect on CDOs work performance. An average of 23.09 percent of respondents observe these factors to be unfavorable to the CDO's work performance, as detailed in Table 3.

As presented in Table 3, the findings imply that an average of more than 32 percent of respondents agreed that these factors are favorable to CDOs work performance. On the other hand, these findings suggest that an average of more than 23 percent of respondents had different views that these factors are unfavorable to CDOs work performance and that improvement in some of the factors is needed for betterment of CDOs work performance.

It can also be deduced from the study that budget allocation (13.75%), leadership style (21.25%), reporting relationship (13.75%), and employee participation in decision-making (23.75%) have more effect on work performance. These findings are in line with the study by Anastasiou and Papakonstantinou [10], who found that teachers' work performance is affected by factors such as the provision of 'ethical rewards', 'good working conditions', 'motivation by the school principal', and 'participation in school administration and decision-making'. The findings are also supported by Doloh et al. [11] who found that

Work performance is affected by work satisfaction, work motivation, and supervision. Work performance is also affected by work load assigned to the employee Herawati et al. [12]. If these factors are poorly considered, it is obvious that the work performance of CD professionals will be greatly affected in a negative way. However, strengthening these factors, for example, the allocation of budget to CD work activities and improving employee participation in decision-making, will enhance CD work performances [13].

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

This paper investigated factors influencing the performance of CD professionals in Northern Tanzania, with a specific focus on selected district councils. Conclusively, the paper found that factors such as budgetary allocation, favorable work climate, leadership style, motivation package, job autonomy, employee/employer relationships, strategic plans, career development, and many more have a positive effect on CD Professionals performance. Improving these factors at the workplace will foster CD workers' performance and hence improve community wellbeing as well.

4.2 Recommendation

4.2.1 To the government

The study recommends that in order to improve the performance of CD professionals, their motivation levels should be scaled up and enhanced both intrinsically and extrinsically. There should be renewed mechanisms to recognize and appreciate the role of CD professionalism and, hence, CD workers. Furthermore, better interventions are urgently required to be put in place so as to raise awareness and education regarding the role of CD professionals and career expertise in guiding and fostering the accomplishment of community development programs and projects in the country. Factors such as more budgetary resources, improved workplace culture and climate, effective leadership style and motivational packages, effective leadership styles, respect for professionalism, employee participation, sound public policies, and job autonomy should be improved in order to

facilitate the discharge of effective professional services by CD professionals in a bid to deliver the desired results of the Tanzania development agenda and global sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is also critical that CD professionals be permitted to function as liaison officers and consultants in a role that fosters and facilitates planning and partnership between the public as a beneficiary and the government as a service provider.

4.2.2 To the CD professionals

The CD workers should be the first to make this career more proud, valuable, and appreciative. They should continuously embark on self-renewal and capacity-building programs to acquire new skills and competences that keep them attractive and engaged in field work and update their significance in contribution to the development programs in Tanzania using participatory development approaches, concepts, and techniques.

4.2.3 To other development stakeholders

Development stakeholders such as the private sector, training institutions, and civil society should renew and strengthen their position of understanding, appreciation, and engagement of the significant role of CD professionals in influencing the performance of community development programs and projects for real sustainable outcomes.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:

The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/108113>