



IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF MOI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Participatory management approach has become part and basal of management in modern organization and its relevance in Moi University cannot be gainsaid. This study sought to: identify the forms of participative mechanisms used at Moi University and investigate the employee views toward participatory management system. A survey design was adopted as a framework to guide the study and targeted 2536 employees. A sample of 507 was selected. A questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data, The findings of study indicated that participation management was beneficial to the organization in many ways such as boosting the employee morale, improving quality of decision and trust between management and. However its implementation in public institution must be done within the limits set in the statutes that created the organization. It was concluded that participatory management has not been very effective in Moi University because of management's reluctance to share power, non-liberal information sharing, and crisis of confidence and on the part of employees representations. It was recommended that university management should try to introduce changes that would reduce the current bureaucratic procedures that are in place in order to expand the space for employee participation. Further research should be done on legal constrain on implementation on participatory management.

Key words: *Delegation, participatory management, employee performance*

1.0 Introduction

More and more organization have impress the concept of involving its employee in running the affairs of the company. Armstrong (1995), argued that employee involvement is the concept of recognition that have a great un-tapped potential but that management retain the right to manage. Participation on the other hand is about playing a greater part in the decision making process. It is a democratic philosophy that respects all members of an organization as an infinite resource able to contribute knowledge and creativity to improving its ability to survive the main problem facing managers in a group of participatory decision making process is the extent to which they should allow subordinates to participate in making decisions which affect their work. By encouraging participatory decision making, managers are in effect decentralizing authority within their organisations. This leads to improved decision quality, increased commitment for employees to the decision outcomes which they have influenced, and, above all, it enhances their job satisfaction and motivation.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Environment in which organization operate continued to change. This dynamism means that significant changes in the way work gets done must also occur whereby are required to do more with less resources. The magnitude of work in any organization, Moi university included, dictates that it cannot be done without assistance in form of employee involvement. Participate in doing this through delegation, work teams, goal setting and empowerment (DeCenzo and Robins, 1996:55

The purpose of this study therefore, was to identify the embark of participatory management on employ performance.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 Main objective

The study aimed at examining the extent of employee participation in the decision making by at Moi University

1.2.2 Specific objectives

- i) To assess the impact of participation on the implementation of the decisions at Moi university
- ii) To investigate factors affecting implementation of participatory management

2.0 Literature Review

Participation of employee in decision making crystallizes the notion of industrial democracy and expresses the employee desire to bind into a team working together towards a common objective. Armstrong (1995) defined employee involvement as the use of one or more methods which are designed to obtain a higher degree of employee commitment to the success of the organization and to enable them to participate and contribute to the decision making process on matters that affect them. It is a concept of recognition that has great-untapped potentials, but that management retain the right to manage. Waweru found out that employees' participation in managerial decisions is not possible under the present

property relationships in Kenya. This is due to free enterprise mode of production that makes it difficult to reconcile the institution of private ownership of the means of production with the postulates of sound employees participation in managerial function

The Moi University calendar 1996/97 indicates that the University Statutes established various committees that involve both employees and students through their representatives so that they articulate matters affecting them. ' participation and involvement can vary according to the level at which it takes place, the degree to which decision-making is shared and the extend to which the mechanisms are formal or informal (Dessler ,1997).

.As an approach to management, participatory management is very useful for it helps to motivate and also helps in the change process by reducing incidences of resistance particularly in the process of implementation. People who are involved in decision making understands those decisions more and are more committed to them which in turn are important ingredients in the successful implementation of such decision.

From the above discussions, it is clear that participation is crucial for better results in any organization, Moi University included.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

A survey design was adopted as a framework to guide the study.

3.2 Target Population

All the employees of Moi University at various levels totally 2536 were targeted in the study. However, due to financial and time limitation a representative sample of 507 employees were randomly selected to participate in the study and were drawn proportionately across the entire organizational hierarchies.

The study adapted a 2- stage sampling process, first, respondents were stratified into various strata comprising of various campus. Second, in each stratum employees were categorize into two levels: *General employees* and *Management*.

3.3 Data

A questionnaire was used to collect data. This instrument was administer on the selected respondents and given a period of two days to responded. However, before the instrument was administered it was piloted to establish it reliability and validity.

The data generated from the study was analyzed using qualitative techniques. Descriptive statistics, percentages, frequencies and graphical methods were used where applicable in analyzing and presenting the data describing the phenomena under investigation.

4.0 Results & Discussion

4.1 Types/Forms of Participation in Decision-Making Process.

Participation in the decision making process in the university takes various forms and the data obtained indicated that 28.6% of participants do so in committees, while those who participate as individuals constitute 18.6%. Those who participate through representation constitute a majority of the respondents 47.1% and those who participate through other forms other than as individual members of committees or by representation constitute 5.7%.

4.2 Respondents views on Participatory Management system

Respondent interviewed stated that if staff are involved in decision-making processes within the University, there are a number of benefits that accrue to both the staff and the organization. Benefits of involvement according to respondents include staff motivation hence higher performance. Another benefit is that it reduces resistance to change and creates commitment to organization objectives. Better utilization of organization resources is another benefit of participation in decision making by employees.

The study also found that participatory management enhances team building. Team building is a very important aspect of management of human resources in any organization. Since participatory management is one method of team building, it has positive effect on employee performance in that when employees work as a team, output tend to be high and cases of absenteeism will be minimized since work teams regulate. When employees are involved in decision making process in the university, it results in better utilization of the skills they posses and this in turn improves the quality of decisions.

Through employee involvement, quality decisions are arrived at and in the process, it assists in team building which is crucial in any organization management.

When employees participate in decision making process, a sense of belonging is enhanced among university employees which helps in the implementation of the decisions so arrived.

Though respondents acknowledge the benefits of participatory management, some appreciated that fact that the system has negative effects. A total of 62.5% of those who see that employee participation should not be encouraged think so on the ground that it causes a lot of delays in decision making, threatens the mandate of managers to be accountable and manage the organization. It also may lead to leakage of crucial information to unauthorized persons particularly strategic decisions. This group of respondents who felt that there was no need to encourage staff to participate in decision making process constituted only 9.4% of the total respondents of 340 who completed and returned the questionnaires while 90.6% supported the idea of encouraging employees to participate in the decision making process through whatever means available for doing so in Moi University.

Another negative effect of participatory management on performance is that in situations where there is no trust, it is viewed by management as a threat to their authority to manage.

Incompetent managers hide on committees to avoid being accountable for the decisions that are supposed to be made by them on day to day basis by forwarding such issues to committees to make the decisions for them. This also affects the organization performance and affects employee morale and performance.

During the research, it was established that most employees felt that they are not given a chance by management to participate in the decision making process in the university. Another observation made was that when staff gave suggestions on the decisions, management ignores them. This demotivates them to participate in future discussions.

One recommendation that was given by the respondents was that staff should be encouraged to participate in the decision making process in the university, so that they can have a sense of belonging. Trust and confidence building is another very important suggestion which the respondents gave through the questionnaires. Since many of the employees felt that even if they make suggestions to management on certain issues, they are not taken seriously and this creates a sense of mistrust and lack of confidence in management.

Placement was another recommendation that came out clearly. Most respondents particularly the non-teaching staff recommended that placement should be commensurate with the skills and appointment based on merit and professional qualification. Low salary was another factor that was mentioned severally as a demotivator in Moi University. Majority of the respondents felt that for improved job satisfaction and performance there is need to review the salary to match rising cost of living. University staff and particularly the teaching staff felt that they were poorly remunerated despite their high academic qualification. The findings of this study showed that the decision making system in place in Moi University is established in the statutes of the Moi university act and their membership clearly spelt out.

4.3 Participation in Decision-Making Process

The data collected and analysed indicated that only 41.2% of the total responses received were involved in some form of decision making whereas a majority 58.8% did not participate at all in any form of decision making process in the university. Of those who participate, 20% did so on daily basis, 30% get involved/participate on monthly basis while 5.75 participate once a year whereas 30% partially participate while 8.6% have participated at some point in the decision making process.

Participation in decision making process occurs at different levels and the research showed that 55.7% of staff who participated do so at the job level while 11.4% participate at management level. Those who participate at policy level constituted 21.4% while those participating at strategic level constitute only 8.6% whereas those participating at other levels comprised only of 2.9%. Participation in the decision making process in the university takes various forms and the data obtained indicated that 28.6% of participants do so in committees, while those who participate as individuals constitute 18.6%. Those who participate through representation constitute a majority of the respondents 47.1% and those who participate through other forms other than as individual members of committees or by representation constitutes 5.7%. Reasons for participation varied and the responses obtained indicated that 25.7% of those who participated in decision making do so as experts in a given field and 12.9% participate as representatives of others. Those participating as heads of departments and sections (cost centres) in the university constitute 44.3% while 12.9% as members of management team. Only 4.2% participate on invitation or due to other reasons other than those stated above.

Members of Moi university staff who do not participate in any way in the decision making process gave varied reasons as to why they do not get involved. A total of 7% do not participate due to lack of interest while those who find no time to participate are only 2%. Those who believe they are not given opportunity to contribute to decision making in the university constituted 76% of those who do not participate.

Those who gave the reason of not being recognized by top management even if they contributed forcing them to take a back seat constituted 12% while those who do not participate due to other reasons other than those stated above constituted 3% of the total non- participating respondents. Results of this study showed that performance of 71.4% of who participate in decision making are positively influenced by their participation in decision-making, whereas participation of 28.6% have no impact on their work performance. The rate of performance of the participating staff above was rated by the same respondents as shown in the table below. A total of 74% of those whose performance is influenced by participation attribute the performance to their being involved in the decision making. On job satisfaction, 52.9% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs while 47.1% were not satisfied with the jobs they were performing. For those who were satisfied with the job, the rate of satisfaction was as shown by the table below. Those who were not satisfied with the job gave a number of reasons for the dissatisfaction as poor working conditions, low pay, lack of recognition by top management and lack of interest. 20.6% of those dissatisfied was due to poor working conditions while 45.6% was as a result of low remuneration (pay). 26.9% was caused by lack of recognition and 6.9% were not satisfied due to lack of interest in the jobs they were doing.

4.4 Management Styles Practiced in Moi University

Management is a set of activities (including planning, decision-making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organizations' resources (human, financial, physical and information) with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner (Griffin, 1999). It is a process which enable organizations to set and achieve their objectives by planning, organizing and controlling their resources including gaining commitment of their . (Cole, 1996) The latter point of this definition of management is the concern of this project.

There are a number of management styles, which can be applied depending on situation obtained at any given time in different organizations. These styles include; management by committees, management by crisis, management by objectives, management by few individuals and participatory management.

Results from the interviews conducted indicated that 19.4% of the respondents believe that the style of management practiced in Moi University is management by committees. A total of 12.9% of the respondents were of the view that management by objectives is the style that is in use whereas 27.1% said that Moi University employs management by crisis in decision making. 34.1% of the respondents saw that Moi University practices exclusive management style

whereby management is by few individuals and only 6.5% of respondents acknowledged existence of participatory style of management as the way in which decisions are made in the university.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate performance of Moi University as an organization and the rating parameters were excellent, good, fair and poor. The findings revealed that 5.3% of the respondents rated Moi University performance as excellent while 20.6% rated it as good. 37.6% placed the performance as fair and 36.5% saw Moi University to be performing poorly. The performance of the university was attributed to the management practices by 87.1% of the respondents while 12.9% said performance had nothing to do with the style of management employed.

4.5 Perceived Benefits of Participatory Management

Respondent interviewed stated that if staff are involved in decision-making processes within the University, there are a number of benefits that accrue to both the staff and the organization. Benefits of involvement according to respondents include staff motivation hence higher performance. Another benefit is that it reduces resistance to change and creates commitment to organization objectives. Better utilization of organization resources is another benefit of participation in decision making by .

Through employee involvement, quality decisions are arrived at and in the process, it assists in team building which is crucial in any organization management.

When participate in decision making process, a sense of belonging is enhanced among university which helps in the implementation of the decisions so arrived.

Though respondents acknowledges the benefits of participatory management, some also appreciated disadvantages of this management style. A total of 62.5% of those who see that employee participation should not be encouraged think so on the ground that it causes a lot of delays in decision making, threatens the mandate of managers to be accountable and manage the organization. It also may lead to leakage of crucial information to unauthorized persons particularly strategic decisions. This group of respondents who felt that there was no need to encourage staff to participate in decision making process constituted only 9.4% of the total respondents of 340 who completed and returned the questionnaires while 90.6% supported the idea of encouraging to participate in the decision making process through whatever means available for doing so in Moi University.

4.6 Evaluation of Moi University Mechanisms for Employee Participation

During the study, the research sought the views of staff on how they participate in decision –making process and the mechanisms or structures in place for ' participation.

The response from respondents on whether the current system of management provides a chance for employee involvement in decision-making was varied. Majority of the respondents who hold no office of responsibility have no direct contribution in the decision making process in the university.

As stated earlier in chapter one of this project, the existing decision making organs in Moi university are departmental committees, Faculty Boards, Deans Committee, Senate and Council on matters of academic whereas on administrative matters, the organs for decision making are section meeting, Heads of sections committee, Division meeting, Management and council.

Ideally all members of the teaching staff have a chance of participating in decision making at departmental level through the departmental committee meetings. At this committee, decisions are made that are forwarded to faculty boards and finally to Senate to be ratified to become policies. In this way, the decision-making organs provide for participation. All heads of teaching departments in the university are members of Senate, which is a decision-making organ, and this provides a forum in which majority of university staff participates in decision making.

The cadres of staff who are not often involved in most decision-making committees are the junior staff and majority of the non-academic staff. This is because most of the professors are members of most strategic policy making committees and in council, representation of teaching staff have six members four of whom are elected by senators and two by teaching staff who are non-senate members whereas the non-teaching staff of whatever cadre are represented by only one representative.

One area which the staff were critical about is the seriousness on the part of university management in implementing suggestion and policies in form of recommendations made by various committees that are appointed from time to time. These in most cases have made staff who have participated in such committees to feel that their recommendations are ignored. One such committee that was mentioned was the committee on the schemes of service for non-teaching staff which was appointed by the vice chancellor in 1999 under the chairmanship of the then principal administrative officer personnel which was to come up with the schemes of service for administrative staff. Another committee whose recommendations have not been implemented is the one on students' disturbances that was chaired by Professor E. Standa.

Study of the existing documents particularly minutes of various committees indicated that members of most decision making committees in the university are mainly made up of teaching members of staff particularly senators. The study also revealed that there is no much problem with the current committee system but the problem is the composition of such committees which do not represent all the staff views across the cadres.

4.7 Effects of Participatory Management on Performance

The university statutes as spelt out in the university act (1984), indicates that management is by committee system, it is clear that a lot of time is lost in terms of man hours since almost daily there is a committee meeting going on and such meetings takes better part of the working hours of those involved. Attendance of such meetings always affects efficiency of certain offices particularly the offices of the chief officers of the university.

One indicator of the effects of committee system on the university performance is evident in finance whereby cheque signing at times is delayed since signatories are held up in meetings. The style also affects performance in that decisions that are supposed to be made by individual officers are delayed since they are first taken to a committee for approval.

Efficiency of chief officers of Moi University is many a times reduced since they often move from one meeting to another. If participants in a committee are not interested due to low morale, efficiency of the organization is also affected in that the decisions that are made are not implemented. Given that majority of the staff particularly the middle grade and the junior cadres feel that they are less involved in the university decision making organs, they are not enthusiastic in implementing policies made by such organs. This affects the level of performance of the individuals and the organization as a whole.

Management by committees according to the respondents delays decisions and if the decisions are delayed, the level of accomplishing tasks is delayed and this in itself affects performance negatively.

Another negative effect of participatory management on performance is that in situations where there is no trust, it is viewed by management as a threat to their authority to manage.

Incompetent managers hide on committees to avoid being accountable for the decisions that are supposed to be made by them on day to day basis by forwarding such issues to committees to make the decisions for them. This also affects the organization performance and affects employee morale and performance.

Though employee participation in management have negative effects on the performance of the university and the organization, it has many positive benefits in the performance. One such effect on performance is that it has a positive boost on the employee morale in that if are involved in decision making, they are motivated and hence they become committed to the organization objectives.

Team building is a very important aspect of management of human resources in any organization. Since participatory management is one method of team building, it has positive effect on employee performance in that when work as a team, output tend to be high and cases of absenteeism will be minimized since work teams regulate. When are involved in decision making process in the university, it results in better utilization of the skills they posses and this in turn improves the quality of decisions.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations.

Conclusions

The research also showed that there are various other ways in which staff in the university are involved in decision making and these include individuals being involved as experts in a given field, as supervisors, as representatives of unions, as heads of departments and deans and as members of task forces and sub-committees.

It is not only involvements in decision making in the university where staff participate but they also often participate in the implementation of the decisions and policies to enable the university meet the stated objectives as spelt out in the act (Moi University Act 1984).

Recommendations

Basing on the findings of the study the following recommendations can be made;

- i. Moi University as an organization is highly bureaucratic and this has made the system not efficient as a result of attendant 'red-tapes' and 'bottle necks' associated with bureaucracy. It is therefore recommended that the red tape be reduced in order to allow decision to be decentralized so that the university could continue to remain relevant in its objectives and mission in a competitive environment.
- ii. The methods of involvement should be expanded to give chance to all the stakeholders to participate and contribute to the shaping of the university through decision making. It is therefore recommended that suggestion box be put in place where staff and other stakeholders can give their suggestion. This is best done through suggestion boxes. A committee should critically analyze the suggestions so obtained and a feedback system and a feedback system also be put in place to evaluate the system.
- iii. normally see management as the responsibility of those at senior positions in the university and think as individuals, they have no role to play in decision making. It is therefore recommended that all staff in the university should be encouraged and motivated to contribute in decisions that help to shape the policies in the university. University management should reinforce the efforts made by staff towards participation in decision making.
- iv. Since decision making process in the university is always done through committee, most staff members especially lecturers see such meetings as time consuming and this has always discouraged them in attending such meetings because it always takes a long time for a meeting to end. In this respect, it is recommended that meetings should be short and this can only be achieved by shortening the agenda.
- v. It was also revealed that most are not satisfied with their jobs not because of the responsibility as such, but because they feel demotivated. The major reason for the demotivation is that job placements are not commensurate with the qualifications. Lack of proper scheme of service which is comprehensive especially for the non-teaching staff is what is lacking in the university and most respondents reported that they have been in one grade for over ten years and all this time they do not have a clear career progression. In this, it is recommended that the university put in place a proper scheme of service for all cadres of staff in order to address the issue of staff morale.

Suggestions for Further Research

More research should be conducted in specific areas of employee participation in decision making in organizations generally, and public universities in particular. This should be done with a view to bring about general understanding on the ways and means of improving the scope and nature of participatory management approaches.

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