

**EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP AND STAFF APPRAISALS ON EMPLOYEES
PRODUCTIVITY
IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF THE COUNTY
GOVERNMENT OF “L”**

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Abstract

Productivity is a requirement for organizations employees. There are various factors attributed to the level of productivity in an organization. The recently formed county governments in Kenya have been faced with the problem of poor service delivery which can be attributed to low employee productivity. As such, this study set out to understand some of the factors that have resulted in the low productivity among county governments with the “L” county government being a case study. The study had the specific objectives of understanding the effects of staff appraisals and leadership, on the productivity of employees at the county government of “L”. However, the specific effects these factors have on productivity of the employee still needs to be determined. The study employed a descriptive research design where the effects of any given factor are described. The data collection tool used was questionnaire. Data was collected from a sample drawn from employees of the “L” County working at the headquarters. The sample was determined on a stratified random case to give every employee an equal chance to be part of the sample. Data collected was analyzed manually and presented in tables and percentages largely describing the correlation between a variable and the effect it has on productivity. From the analysis, the study found out that indeed, there is a strong correlation between staff appraisals, motivation and productivity whereby, the more motivated employees are, the higher the likelihood of more productivity. The study recommends that county government leadership needs to facilitate training and acquisition of skills for the employees to be more productive. It also needs to motivate the employees for productivity to rise. The results of the findings are important to the other county governments and the national government and indeed to all organizations in that they can be used as guide in enhancing productivity in Kenya.

Key Words: Commission for University Education, Human Resource Management, Information Communication Technology, Service Delivery, Performance, Productivity, Motivation, Employee Skills, staff appraisals, leadership styles

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that productivity in any organization is important for the good performance of the organization. Studies done over the years all over the world indicate that productivity is affected by relatively few factors, some of which are organizational specific while others can be seen as universal. According to Armstrong, (2006), workers are generally aware of the factors that inhibit their performance. However, the way the government works is case specific and as such the need to identify those factors. Identification of the specific productivity factors relevant to the government sector workforce may yield opportunities for significant productivity gains in public sector. According to Lawrence (2010), a comparison between productivity advancement in governmental organizations and those in the private sector reveal that the governmental organizations have not kept pace with the increases in productivity as found in the private sector.

According to Armstrong (2002) an organization's success mostly depends on the employees. The level of employee performance determines the level of organizational success in any industry. Chebet, (2015) argues that exploring and understanding those factors that affect the employee performance and hence productivity is of major concern in every Economy worldwide. A study by Coole in 2009 found that productivity level in 2009 in sub-Saharan Africa economies have been reported as having the lowest level of productivity (Coole, 2009). Nigel, (2009) points out that Human Resources Management practices have

significant impact on organizations productivity. According to Nigel training and development, team work, human resources planning and performance appraisal are do influence employee performance.

The constitution of Kenya 2010, gave rise to county governments with the 2013 general elections marking the official launch of 47 Counties, “L” County included. Since then, functions and funds have been transferred to the new counties, and new county institutions have gained prominence. Each function is under the management of an Executive Member assisted by a Chief Officer, but the County Secretary heading the Administration Department is the Chief Executive Officer. The chief officer is mandated to ensure that there is smooth operation of the County (Alande, 2013).

Strikes and go slows have been witnessed in most of the counties since their inception. Alande (2015) has pointed out the case of increasing client complaints being experienced in almost all counties mainly because of poor service delivery. In “L” County, there has been a hue and cry over the quality of services ranging from poor garbage and solid waste management, pollution, water shortages and poor roads among others. The main reason cited is poor service delivery by the employees. The employee productivity is very low. This has challenged the researcher to examine the factors that influences the employee performance in “L” County. Understanding such factors could enable the county raise the employees’ performance so as to provide satisfactory services and in a better way

Statement of the Problem

After the Promulgation of the constitution of Kenya 2010 and thereafter, the 2013 general election, a number of people left other sectors of the economy including renowned companies and joined the work force of the County governments (Chebet, 2015). This was as

a result of perceived attractive compensation and better terms of engagement, coupled by high level of optimism which a lot of people had. It was then expected that the quality of services, effectiveness and efficiency by employees would be irreproachable. However, a number of studies have pointed out the poor performance of employees in various County Governments. Various reasons have been cited for this state of affairs. Some of the reasons cited include subjective performance appraisal, poor working conditions, leadership method, employee management method, training, compensation, and political factors. This study embarks on trying to determine those factors which affect employees' productivity in County Governments to the due to many complaints documented on the poor services offered to citizens by the County Governments.

Research Objective

This general objective is to investigate factors that affect County Government's employees' productivity in Kenya

The specific objectives were

- i. To establish the effects of staff appraisals on employee's productivity at "L" County Government
- ii. To establish the effect of leadership on employees productivity at "L" County Government

Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of staff appraisals on employee productivity at "L" County Government?

- ii. What are the effects of leadership on employees' productivity at “L” County?

Theoretical Literature Review

This research was underpinned by the following theories: Systems Approach Theory and Contingency Approach

Systems Approach Theory

According to Jackson, (2007), the systems approach theory indicates that everything in the organization is linked to everything else in the organization. As such, there is a place for everything and everything in its place. At the final end, there is stability in the organization. Jackson concludes that it is the management who has the responsibility to plan, organize, control and coordinate all the activities of the organization.

According to (Hatch, 2006), the systems approach focuses on the interrelationships of structure and behavior. The organizational structure will modify behaviour and vice versa. The organization is seen both as a whole and as part of a larger environment. This environment includes the relationships between the technical and social variables within the system. In this regard, technology is believed to be a critical factor affecting the organizational design contrary to the assertion of one way relationships as seen in the classical theory. From the arguments of Judge (2007), the systems theory of organization consists of five components; inputs, process, outputs, feedback and environment.

According to judge, inputs are the material, human, financial and the information resources transformation, process is the management's use of production technology to change the inputs into outputs, Outputs include the organization's products and services. Feedback is the knowledge of results that would influence the selection of inputs.

The Environment is the social, economic and political forces that influence the organization.

The Contingency Approach

According to Judge et al (2007) the contingency approach emphasizes the need for flexibility. There is no one best way to structure or manage organizations but management decisions should take situational and contextual factors into account. Management's job is to learn and identify the specific characteristics of the situation and then fit solutions to overcome these contingencies. The size of the organization, the technology employed, the industry characteristics and the environment in terms of external changes and uncertainty are some of some of the Contingency factors influencing organizational design and effectiveness. The contingency approach draws attention to the possibilities of different structures of the organization, each with a different impact on the organizational effectiveness (Judge, 2007).

Empirical Literature Review

Effect of Leadership and Productivity

A leader is considered as a person with the ability to persuade others to his/her views and thus a course of action. The Leader, thus, is able to take his followers with him through a process of guiding and influencing others to in achieving some predetermined goals. The leader has to interact with the followers in some way for him to be able to influence them. In an organization, the leader will try to influence the behavior of employees with the aim of having them assist the organization to achieve its objectives. Any leader should be able to inspire those he is leading, make appropriate decisions and show

them the best way to achieve whatever they set out to do. Leadership is thus responsibility to lead others to achieve organizational goals: (Kradwoski, 2004).

A manager is basically a leader for those under them. As such, according to Kotler (2003), Managers have to positively inspire their workers to achieve better results. They are leaders. Managers may be overwhelmed by their responsibilities as a lot is expected of them. To acquire all the necessary skills necessary to ensure that managers are leaders, they have to accurately predict what would happen in the foreseeable future and plan for such. An organization therefore needs to nurture new managers who will take the organization to higher levels of performance. Harackiewicz, (2003) has identified poor leadership as a major reason for low morale and unsatisfactory employee performance.

It is understood that managers are leaders and they are nurtured. However, before this can happen, a good assessment of the character and deportment of the potential managers must be carefully assessed. Coole, (2012) notes that star performers in the operational areas are not automatic leaders. So only those with leadership qualities should be considered for such crucial posts in the organization.

Supervision also requires that one become a leader so as to effectively supervise others. Herti, et al (2011) in their study noted that the relationship between a supervisor and those he/she is supervising has a significant effect on productivity. In this case, poor relationships results to the breeching of employees' right to good treatment and thus low fulfillment of psychological needs. The end result is poor organizational performance. Being confident and decisive often endears supervisors to those under them which promote a positive relationship as argued by Hagberg, (2014).

Bosses are expected to be in tune to their people. Lawrence (2010) notes that bosses are expected to take charge effectively of the team they lead. This is echoed by Elliot (2009), who argues that getting and giving credit, taking responsibility and providing psychological safety are some of the responsibilities a good supervisor should take up. Hands-on transactional management provides an opportunity for supervisors to produce results from their teams. It is believed that a good supervisor will most likely translate to improved employee performance.

A prerequisite to corporate success it is the way its leaders apply management techniques. Many authors note that the techniques must start from within the organization and they should include mechanisms to ensure commitment. According to (Judge, 2007), communication, quality management, benchmarking, process improvement and measurement are some of the techniques available to a manager who wishes to improve.

Effects of Performance Appraisal and Productivity

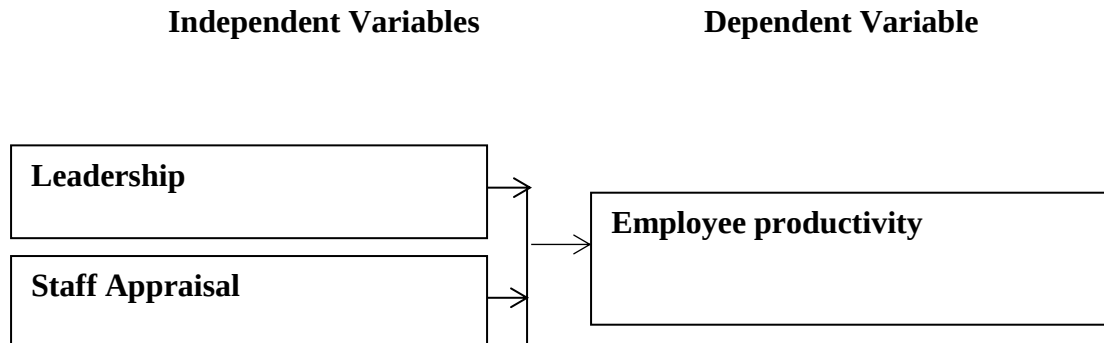
According to Armstrong (2006), performance appraisal is the identification, measurement and management of the human resource performance in an organization. He argues that organizations conduct appraisals for administrative purposes and to ascertain employee performance. Employee performance appraisal can also be seen as a process of assessing, summarizing and developing the work performance of an employee in an organization in order to improve employee productivity in the organization he further indicates that the much of the employee performance literature and the emphasis of developing employee competencies and improving employee performance are derived from the resource-based perspective of business strategy which is used for achieving business goals (Hagberg, 2014).

Under the resource-based perspective, competitive advantage is derived from a firm's physical, human, and organizational resource and that the human resource controls all the other resources

and thus should be continually checked to ensure it is performing according to set standards (Hatch, 2006). Coole (2012) says that performance appraisals help employees understand how they are doing in relation to objectives and standards of their job. The feedback given to the employee will help them improve their perceptions towards their work. Accordingly, a good performance appraisal system will identify performance standards and core competencies and communicate them to employee. Periodical appraisals help the company to compare employees' performance with desired performance and to take apt and appropriate decisions for further improvement. High performance may merit salary increment, bonuses or promotion says that performance appraisals are used to describe how well individuals perform their work.

The success of performance appraisals depends on the frequency of feedback concerning the performance of the employees. According to, feedback should be provided on a regular basis as it will improve employee perceptions towards their work. The performance appraisal systems began as simple methods of income justification (Alande, 2013). The process was firmly linked to material outcomes.

Performance appraisals affect employee perceptions towards work by enabling the employees know what is expected of them on the job **and** measuring the actual performance against the expected performance indicates that employees work hard to achieve set targets. Lack of performance appraisals may reduce employee performance since the employees may relax knowing they will not be evaluated against any set targets.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study has adopted a descriptive survey research design. This is because it attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population in respect to one or more variables. In addition, descriptive research design was thought suitable because the researcher was to collect data and report the way the situation is without manipulating any variable as explained by Consuelo, (2010).

Target Population

The target population was all the employees of County Government of “L” who are stationed at the county headquarters in Nanyuki town. The County Government of “L” human resources department has listed 1875 employees who are based at the Nanyuki headquarters. The employee databank indicated that the organization had a total of 1800 employees spread between eight ministries and directorates. The target population was thought sufficient to allow for generalizations on determinants of employees productivity in County government of “L” and the other County government in Kenya. The targeted population is spread as indicated in table 1.

Table 1

Ministry/Directorate	Number of Employees
Public Service and County Administration	310
Finance & Economic Planning	240
Health	256
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	120
Water, Environment and Natural Resources	95
Land, Infrastructure and Urban Development	360
Directorate of Energy, Roads and Transport	280
Education, Gender, Youth, Sports and ICT	139
Total	1800

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample size

The main factor to consider in determining the sample size is the need to keep the sample size manageable enough. A sample size of between 10 and 30% of the population is considered as adequately representing the population it is drawn from.(Consuelo, 2010). A sample size of 10% will be used to ensure that the sample size is manageable enough.

Sampling Technique

The study has employed the Stratified random sampling method to get a suitable sample from the population. Employees are grouped in their respective categories and then randomly selecting 10% of the respondents from each category. This allows every individual to have a chance of being included in the sample. The sample population is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Population

Ministry/Directorate	Population	Sample size
Public Service and County Administration	310	31
Finance and Economic Planning	240	24
Health	256	25
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development	120	12

Water, Environment and Natural Resources Management	95	10
Land, Infrastructure and Urban Development	360	36
Directorate of Energy, Roads and Transport	280	28
Education, Gender, Youth, Sports and ICT	139	14
Total	1800	180

Research Instrument

The research used a questionnaire as the research instrument. The questions were designed to elicit responses appropriate to the questions that needed to be answered for the study to achieve its specific objectives. The Questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected staff in their respective offices. This provided an opportunity for respondents to think through their answers and consult where necessary.

Pilot Study

Since the questionnaires were self-administered they were pre-tested to ensure elimination of vague questions for ease of understanding by giving a few to some of the employees before the actual study. The responses obtained from these initial questionnaires guided the research in formulating appropriate questions that enabled respondents to provide relevant and precise information needed for the research. They also made tabulation of information much easier among other benefits of using the tool

Data Collection Procedure

Validity

A pilot study was conducted to help establish content validity of the questionnaire. The questions were carefully constructed and refined after the pilot study. The research instrument was also reviewed and amended by experts in the area of study

Reliability Test

To establish the reliability of the questionnaires the instrument was provided to a total of 35 respondents (at least 10% of the sample size) at the county government. The reliability respondents were repeatedly asked the same questions and the answers were eventually used in the construction of the final questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Data collected was then be classified according to the properties that characterized each of them. Respondents' total scores and percentages were used to analyze the data. Respondents' scores were analyzed in descriptive statistics using tables and percentages. Furthermore charts and graphs are used in presentation the results of data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Full consent of all respondents was sought before the questionnaires were administered. All subjects were assured of total confidentiality and the data obtained was to be used for research purpose only. The study tried to avoid creating any form of risk to the participants. There were no direct benefits to the respondents but the results are expected to be of value to the entire organization.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Satisfaction of employees with Support given by leadership

Table 3: leadership support for employees

Are you satisfied with the support given to you by the HR department?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly satisfied	30	16.5
Satisfied	39	21.7
Dissatisfied	43	23.9
Highly dissatisfied	38	21.1
Neutral	20	11.2
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

The majority of employees (23.9) are not satisfied with the support they receive from the top managers in the human resource department. The implication is that the majority do not feel that there is good leadership. There is also a sizeable minority (21.1%) that is highly dissatisfied with the support from the H.R department. This also indicates poor leadership which is not good for improving productivity. However, there is a sizeable number (16.5%) who are highly satisfied with the support they receive from HR.

How well employees are inspired by their superiors to work better

Table 4: Extent to which employees feel inspired by their superiors

Level of inspiration by superiors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly inspired	30	16.5
Moderately inspired	39	21.8
Not inspired at all	63	35.0
Don't know	38	21.1
Non response	10	5.6

Total	180	100.0
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Superiors do not inspire their juniors according to the majority. From the data analyzed, 35% of employees do not feel inspired by their superiors at all by their leaders, 21.8% feel moderately inspired, while 16.5% are highly inspired. The greater majority who feel uninspired at all indicates that there is poor leadership

Satisfaction with performance appraisal System

Table 5: level of satisfaction with the performance appraisal system used

To what extent are satisfied with the current performance appraisal system?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly satisfied	12	6.7
Moderately satisfied	25	13.9
Low satisfaction	113	62.8
Not satisfied at all	20	12.2
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

The performance appraisal system in this organization is unpopular and there is low satisfaction with its use according to the majority (62.8%). The current system is thus not able to enhance employee productivity as very few of them have faith in it. Only 6.7% of them are highly satisfied. These could be the people who actually perform the duty of appraising performance. There is a sizeable number (12.2%) who are totally unsatisfied with the system in use. Productivity cannot thus be enhanced using the system.

Level of improving individual's service delivery levels with the organization providing the individual's motivating factors.

Table 6: Extent individual's improvement with right motivation

To what extent would you improve in your service deliver if you were provided with what motivates you?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very high Improvement	92	51.1
Moderately improvement	63	35.0
Low improvement	15	8.3
Not improvement at all	0	0.0
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

Should the management organization deliver to employees what they feel motivates them, majority (51.1%) would make a very great improvement in the individual delivery of services. Another 35% would make a moderate improvement while 8.3% would realize a low improvement individually in their work delivery. No one would not realize any improvement. The indication is that productivity would improve with the right motivator for the individual employee

Effects of performance appraisal on morale of employees

Table 7: Impact of performance appraisal on morale

How does performance appraisal impact on your morale?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly improves morale	9	5.0
Moderately improves morale	12	6.7
Not change in morale at all	20	11.1
Moderately demoralising	80	44.4
Highly demoralising	49	27.2
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

Performance appraisal is largely demoralizing. According to the statistics collected and analyzed for this study, 44.4% of respondents are of the opinion that to them performance appraisal is moderately demoralizing to them, 27.25% find it highly demoralizing and 11.1 5 find no change in their moral even after going through a performance appraisal. This data indicates that employee performance appraisal impacts negatively on individuals' productivity because a demoralized individual cannot be as productive as they would.

Results of performance appraisal

Table 8: Frequency of getting expected results

How often do you receive the results you expected after a performance appraisal exercise?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	4	2.2
Rarely	89	49.5
Never	21	11.6
Don't bother with results	56	31.1
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

Rarely do employees get the results of performance appraisal they expected. The majority (49.5) rarely receive the results they expect while 31.1% actually never bother with the results at all. Perhaps the results have frustrated them and as such they don't bother following up for the results. All in all, it can be seen that performance appraisal does not reflect what the employees expect and as such it could read to individuals not having faith in it. As such it would lack credibility.

Effect of performance appraisal on individual performance

Table 9: Effect of performance appraisal on employee performance

How does performance appraisal impact on your performance?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly improves performance	7	3.8
Moderately improves performance	14	7.8
Not change in performance	18	10.0
Moderately lowers performance	84	46.7
Highly lowers performance	47	26.1
Non response	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0

Performance appraisal lowers individuals' performance. According to the majority (46.7%), performance appraisal moderately lowers performance and for 26.1%, performance appraisal highly lowers performance. Only 7.8% of respondents feel that performance appraisal moderately improves performance while 3.8% feel that it highly improves performance. From the earlier question, it was found that appraisal is demoralizing to the majority of employees and as such we can expect their performance and hence productivity to go down.

. Summary of Findings

The response rate for this study is very high at 94 %. As mentioned in the analysis, this rate means that the study findings are representative of the population and as such valid. Gender wise, though males are more than females, still the sample population meets the agreed minimum of gender parity where neither gender is less than 60% of the total. Males constitute 61% of the population while females constitute the rest (39%). All working ages are represented by the sample population. That is there are representatives from the lowest working age of 18 years to the age of 57 years and above. This indicates

that there is no bias towards any one age group and the responses are therefore valid as they reflect all working ages.

Employees are well educated with all levels of education from secondary school to PhD being represented. This indicates a high level of skills amongst the population. The expectation is that due to the high levels of education, productivity of the individual should be high. However, there are other factors in play here other than education. Hardly do the employees advance their training through seminars and other means of imparting skills and knowledge. The effect is that skills do improve productivity but they need to be upgraded regularly. This does not happen here as only a minority attended trainings and seminars on a regular basis. Still, there is general agreement that there is need to have professional qualifications for the work or tasks one does. Those without such skills need to have them, yet they hardly ever attend any training and it can be safely assumed that such skills are absent amongst the majority of the workforce. The overall effect is that skills improve productivity but one needs to constantly update them to maintain that productivity. For this county government, it needs to have the employees attend regular trainings to enhance their skills by organizing for seminars, in-house trainings etc. this is clearly shown by the statistics where the majority (66.7%) agree that professional qualification greatly enhances productivity of the individual.

The performance appraisal system in this organization is unpopular and there is low satisfaction with its use according to the majority (62.8%). The current system is thus not able to enhance employee productivity as very few of them have faith in it. The effect is

that the appraisal system in place has led to lower levels of productivity among the employees of the organization. A further analysis clearly demonstrates this fact. From the statistics, 44.4% of respondents are of the opinion that to them performance appraisal is moderately demoralizing to them. There is a good reason for this. The reason is that the majority of employees (49.5%) rarely ever get the results they expect. The effect of this is that performance appraisal lowers individuals' performance according to the majority (46.7%).

From the study, several recommendations may be made. For one, there is poor leadership that is uninspiring to the majority of employees. For this reason, the management needs to change its leadership style and adopt a leadership style that inspires the employees to reach higher in their service delivery. This if adopted will raise productivity of the employees. This is because there is a direct relationship between the type of leadership and productivity as established in the analysis. This applies to all other similar organizations (county Government). They need to have inspiring leadership if the level of productivity is to rise.

Motivation is a factor of productivity as demonstrated by the findings of this study. However, employees are motivated by different things. Top among them is remuneration and management of every organization needs to recognize this and provide it. Should this happen, level of productivity will rise accordingly. It is recommended that the management should go out of its way to motivate employees for productivity to rise. Again, employee should feel supported by their superiors for productivity to rise.

Performance appraisal should be relooked as there is evidence that it could demoralize employees with the consequent drop in productivity. It is recommended that the organization should adopt an appraisal system that gives results acceptable to employees at least. Again, employees should feel that the results reflect what they expect.

Education attainment is important for basic skills. However, this must be complemented by professional trainings which should be regular for all employees. It is recommended that this particular organization and other similar organizations should scout for the employees with professional skills in the jobs they are assigned to and not just that but also institute trainings regularly to enhance the skills as the work environment is continuously changing for productivity to improve. There is ample evidence that with professional qualifications coupled with regular trainings, the level of productivity would improve to very great extent.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, the study concludes by saying that county government s and other similar organizations are facing poor employee productivity as a result of a number of factors working together. Though they have highly educated employees, they are not training them regularly and as such their level of skill remains low. For this reason, their productivity hardly rises but more often it goes down. This translates to poor service delivery. Skills acquisition and upgrading is thus important in ensuring a rise in productivity. This answers the research question “what are the effects of skills on productivity” by saying that the level of skills has a positive and direct relationship with

productivity in that the higher the level of skills and the more they are upgraded, the more we can expect productivity to rise.

On the other hand, motivation is very important in determining the level of productivity. Less motivated employees have low productivity. The research question on what the effects of motivation are on productivity is addressed, thus answered in that motivation would increase productivity of the individual employees and the organization as a whole.

Leadership effects productivity. For productivity to rise, the leaders have to inspire their followers to higher levels of service delivery. Good leadership that inspires individuals must be cultivated. The research question on the effects of leadership on productivity can be addressed thus good leadership that inspires individuals' raises productivity.

Performance appraisal is another factor that significantly influences productivity. The relationship is that with a given system of appraisal, individuals may end up being demoralized and therefore less productive. The available evidence supports this assertion but cannot be conclusive given that there several employee performance appraisal methods. However, the important thing is that the method used should resonate with the individual employee and the results should be acceptable to the individual. Without this, there is danger that any performance appraisal could have negative effect(s) on the productivity.

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