

# **Factors Influencing Community Development Professionals Performance at Workplace: The Case of Seven Selected District Councils in Northern Tanzania.**

## **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 formulation and implementation of strategic policy interventions by government to address challenges of service and goods delivery to communities. However, their roles are not well known among the authorities, this causes their work performance and factor affecting them not clearly known. A Sample of 80 respondents which included Community Development officers (CDOs) and District Community Development Officer (DCDOs) was used. 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 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 aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) descriptive statistics were used and presented in tabular form. It was found that budget allocation, motivation package, leadership style, work climate, respect of professionalism and experts positively/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 place will enhance CD workers' performance and hence improve community well-being.

## **Key words:**

*Community development, CD Professionals, Work Performance, Tanzania*

## **1. Introduction**

Wambua (2015) indicate that the role of community development (CD) professionals is basically meant to assist and facilitate formulation and implementation of strategic policy interventions by 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 active role of community engagement and mobilization (Mpembeni, Bhatnagar and LeFevre *et al.*, 2015).

Kawakatsu, Sugishita, and Tsutsui (2015) explains that the role of CD professionals in both local and central government services is often less understood or misunderstood by the stakeholders, as a result they are underutilized in the course of delivering services like provision of water and sanitation and other social services such as energy/electricity provision, housing, social security and others. In essence, the 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 (Mpembeni, Bhatnagar and LeFevre, 2015).

Kawakatsu, Sugishita and Tsutsui (2015) further reiterates that at the heart of all community development profession is the set of participatory approaches and serious involvement of communities in bringing about development (Daneshkoham, 2015). CD professionals like any other professionals functioning in 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 (Daneshkoham,2015).

Wambua (2015) defined community development (CD) is a broad term given to the practices of civic activists, involved citizens and professionals to build stronger and more resilient local communities. Community development discipline and programme seeks 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 demands or calls for new sets of human competences and new way of thinking and adapting modern concepts on how to treat well the workplace employees such as community development professionals in particular."Employees are the most valued organization's assets....." (Odukah,2016).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 to treat the workplace employees as human beings by guiding and leading through promoting humanistic values at work (Odukah,2016).

Wambua (2015) reiterates that community-oriented projects/programmes, business and political – economic environment today is continuously subjected to, and characterized by turbulent and changing forces and opportunities which actually require managers of the day to act more competently, humane, 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 will effectively and efficiently combine the three skills are likely to create and sustain excellent workplace in which employees and the community development professionals in particular will remain committed, dedicated, and mutually responsible for envisaged national community development goals and strategies (Shava&Dovhani, 2016).

Shava&Dovhani (2016) 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 discriminative. A strategic

motivation profile focused on these CD professionals is required in place to guarantee presence of the highly motivated work personnel in the community development process.

Wambua(2015) provides also that community development is a fundamental concept but when it comes to implementation of the sector in the development process, it is not recognized as a vital profession and 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 offers a practice that is part of a process of social change.

Shava&Dovhani (2016) describes that community development as a holistic approach must take the lead in confronting the attitudes of individuals and the practices of institutions and society as a whole which bring fair development among all people, women, people with disabilities and different abilities, religious groups, elderly people, and other groups who are disadvantaged in the community. It also must take a 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.

Wambua (2015) clarifies that community development process should seek to develop structures which enable the active involvement of all people as primary stakeholders in the development process and issues which affect their lives. It is a process based on the sharing of power, skills, knowledge and experience and 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 has been shown and proved to be very significant to the development and the accomplishment of the community development's goals and objectives and achievement and maintaining of long term survival and sustainability of the projects. Unfortunately, as it was remarked and lightly pointed out in the beginning there are no obvious literature, research projects, and findings specially focused to address the motivation side of the CD professionals in Tanzania(Shava&Dovhani, 2016).

The study by Odukah (2016) 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, and not interact well with their co-workers or comply with their managers' directions. Besides these problems, asymmetric information or 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, 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 organization outcome for which they had no impact or they were not solely responsible for.

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 interest 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. The 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 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 Discussions

### 3.1. Demographic characteristics

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

#### 3.1.1. Occupation

It was the intention of the study to examine CD workers occupation so as to reveal as to whether employee occupying CD work position possess relevant profession. The findings revealed that most of CD workers have relevant CD profession as they are employed as Assistant CDOs and CDOs as shown in Table 1.

**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)

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

### 3.1.2. Years spent by employees in CD service position

It has been an interest of the study to determine duration spent by employees in CD service position. This is because year spent by the employees in CD work reveals experience an individual have in the profession. In this case, experiences helped to uncover factors affecting their work performance. In order to determine this, respondents were presented with years spent by employee in CD service position in four categories in ranges. The findings indicate that majority 42.5 percent of respondents have served as CD worker in 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 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)

The findings in table 2 suggest that respondents have an experience on community development activities and they are aware of factors that may inhibit their efforts toward work performance. The use of their experiences can transform work attitude of community development professionals upon the implementation of their opinion and observation.

## 3.2. Factors affecting CDOs Work Performance

The study intended to examine factors affecting work performance for CDOs in which the factors were rated based on scales of its favoritism. Examined factors included budget allocation, motivation package, leadership style, work climate, respect of 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 does not have effect on CDOs work performance. An average of 23.09 percent of respondents observes these factors to be unfavorable to the CDOs work performance as detailed in table 3

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)

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 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(s) in work performance. These findings are in line with the study by Anastasiou and Papakonstantinou (2014) who found that teachers' work performance is affected by the factors such as 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 Dolohet-all (2018) who found that Work performance is affected by work satisfaction, work motivation, and supervision. If these factors are poorly considered it is obvious work performance of CD professionals will greatly be affected in a negative way. However,

strengthening these factors for example allocation of budget to CD work activities, improving employee participation in decision making will enhance CD work performances.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

##### **4.1. Conclusion**

This paper investigated factors influencing performance of CD professionals in Northern Tanzania with a specific focus on selected district councils. Conclusively; the paper found out 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 workplace will foster CD workers' performance and hence improve community wellbeing as well.

##### **4.2. Recommendations**

###### **4.2.1 To the government**

The study recommends that in order to improve 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 accomplishment of community development programmes 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 discharge of effective professional services of the CD professionals in a bid to delivering desired results of the Tanzania development agenda and global sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is also critical that the CD professionals should be permitted to function as liaison officers and consultant role that fosters and facilitates planning and partnership between the public, as beneficiary, and the government as 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 the 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 societies should renew and strengthen their position of understanding, appreciation and engagement of the

significant role of CD professionals in influencing betterment of performance of community development programs and projects for real sustainable outcomes.

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