Full Length Research Paper

Improving Organizational Performance through Job Satisfaction and Quality Assurance

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This study sought to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, quality assurance and organizational performance using a quantitative survey study conducted on staff of Kalangala Oil Palm Growers' project. A total of 20 employees on the project and 1173 farmers participating in producing oil palm were involved on the study. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation results reveal a positive relationship between Job satisfaction and Quality Assurance (r = .431**, p<.01), and a positive relationship between quality assurance and organizational performance(r = .802**, p<.01). Similarly regression results indicate that Job Satisfaction and Quality Assurance have the potential to determine 79.2% of the Organizational Performance (Adjusted R Square = .792). The regression model is significant (Sig. <.01). Organizational Performance in terms ffbs improves by 1000tonnes, the 792tonnes increment as a result of efforts towards Job Satisfaction and Quality Assurance. We recommend that top management should improve job satisfaction and allocate resources for quality assurance.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Quality Assurance, Organizational performance

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that Job satisfaction is a key factor for improved employee productivity, although there are conflicting statements made by Human Resource professionals and managers in organizations of HR professionals (Rynes, Colbert, and Brown, 2002), as well as based on experience, the major practitioner knowledge gaps in this area are: (1) the causes of employee attitudes, (2) the results of positive or negative job satisfaction, and (3) how to measure and influence employee attitudes. Continuing this theoretical development, Judge and his colleagues (Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge, Locke, Durham, and Kluger, 1998) found out that a key personality trait, core self-evaluation, correlates with (is statistically related to) employee job satisfaction. They also found that one of the primary causes of the relationship was through the perception of

the job itself. Thus, it appears that the most important situational effect on job satisfaction—the job itself—is linked to what may be the most important personality trait to predict job satisfaction—core self evaluation. Evidence also indicates that some other personality traits, such as extraversion and conscientiousness, can also influence job satisfaction (Judge, Heller, and Mount, 2002).

Quality assurance, or QA (in use from 1973), is the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service or facility to maximize the probability that minimum standards of quality are being attained by the production process. QA cannot absolutely guarantee the production of quality products. Organizations are motivated to perform high quality services "in order to protect the firm's brand reputation and to avoid costly litigation" (Khurana and Raman 2004, 473). Broadly speaking, reputation-based explanations of service quality hold that assurance firms have an incentive to engage in high quality services in an effort to maintain and increase demand for their services (DeAngelo 1981; Wallace 1987, 2004). On the other hand, it is an incentive to engage in high quality services as an effort to lower expected litigation costs (Dye 1993; Lennox 1999; Newman et al. 2005). In most situations, it is difficult or impossible to disentangle the extent to quality assurance stems from motivated employees (Watkins et al. 2004). This study sought to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, quality assurance and organizational performance in Uganda.

An overview of Uganda's oil sub-sector

Uganda's consumption of oils and fats increased from 3.9 kg/year/person in 2000 to 5.6 kg/year/person in 2008. This rate is very low compared to global average of 22.4 kg/year/person. Despite this low rate of consumption, Uganda still continues to import about 60-70% of its edible oil and soap needs, as do most of the neighboring countries in East Africa. Population growth and rising incomes will continue to fuel an annual growth rate of 9% in domestic and regional demand for vegetable oil and its by-products for the foreseeable future.

Government of Uganda has been working to increase national production of vegetable oil crops, to promote investment in processing and use the country's production potential to reduce national imports of vegetable oil. In the mid 1990s, there was one large scale miller operating in the country, importing crude palm oil (CPO) for refining as well as refining oil from domestically produced crops, principally sunflower. IFAD approved the Vegetable Oil Development Project (VODP) in April 1997, which aimed to introduce oil palm cultivation in Uganda and extended sunflower production in the north and east. In 2000 GoU signed an agreement with a private sector operator to develop commercial and Small holder

oil palm plantations in Kalangala District, thus introducing a second large-scale miller for processing CPO and creating competition in this part of the industry.

Literature review

This section presents the key thematic areas generated from different sources of literature in regards to the study objective. These thematic areas job satisfaction and quality assurance.

Job satisfaction and Quality Assurance

Quality assurance refers to combining the managerial competencies of different industry players (government regulators, NGOs, private businesses and farmers) in gradually minimizing or totally eliminating conditions that compromise the satisfaction of customers in different segments (Chase et al. 2004). This implies that solving quality control challenges should be an industry-wide responsibility if a sustained competitive edge is to be achieved. But this cannot be done without understanding and emphasizing the basic principles of total quality management (TQM) namely; customer-orientated culture, focus on internal business processes, preference for error-prevention, top management commitment and continuous improvement of products and services (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). These principles can act as the binding factor in pulling together the competencies and resources of different industry players in addressing quality control constraints.

It also means that the notion of quality assurance is applicable in cases where public institutions relegate service provision to private businesses as they perform the role of regulating the industry. To illustrate the point, Freeman (2002) found out that robustness in the use of quality-oriented performance indicators can deliver the desired results in managing public-private health projects. He, however, cautioned that differences in attitudes and expectations between private health care organizations and quality control experts from government can create tensions. Another example is a study by the World Bank (2009) which concluded that public-private partnerships in the education sector are instrumental in assuring quality through voucher schemes or charter schools. This was based on findings from the Philippines which revealed that well-designed quality assurance mechanisms can provide consumers, providers, and government officials with valuable information on the performance of private schools and ensure that providers are meeting quality standards.

Similarly, the inter-organizational perspective is increasingly shaping the understanding of quality assurance in the vegetable oil industry. For instance, the

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value	Content Validity Index
Job Satisfaction	10	0.666	0.700
Quality Assurance	8	0.721	0.750
Organization Performance	14	0.865	0.714

Table 2. Level of education Distribution in the Sample

			Respondent Category		Total
			Staff	Farmers	
Highest level of Education	None	Count		98	98
		Column %		33.8%	32.7%
	Degree	Count	3	19	22
		Column %	30.0%	6.6%	7.3%
	Post Graduate	Count	2	4	6
		Column %	20.0%	1.4%	2.0%
	Others	Count	5	169	174
		Column %	50.0%	58.3%	58.0%
Total		Count	10	290	300
		Sample %	3.3%	96.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary data

trend in the governance of global agri-food value chains in the last 10 to 15 years is the increasing prevalence of private standards alongside public sector standards (Jaffee and Henson, 2004; OECD, 2004). Collaborative efforts between private firms and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also progressively laid down standards for food safety, food quality and environmental and social aspects of agri-food production, which are generally linked in turn to processes of public sector certification (Busch *et al.*, 2005). While not subject to the same legal processes of enforcement as public regulations, it is argued that market forces can make compliance with private standards mandatory for livestock producers and marketers (Henson, 2007). Thus, in the sphere of vegetable oil safety, many global agri-food value chains are governed by an array of public and private standards, which are variously interconnected and play a leadership role in driving the implementation of food safety controls.

Dean and Bowen (1994) comprehensively reviewed literature and argue that quality assurance approach to management should be characterized by customer focus, continuous improvement and teamwork, and note that these are the explicit or implicit focuses of the key proponents of TQM. Dean and Bowen argue that each principle is implemented through a set of practices—such as collecting customer information or analyzing organizational processes. TQM practices are, in turn, supported by a variety of techniques such as customer surveys and team-building events.

Quality Assurance is aimed at satisfying customers" needs. This is the position taken by many management experts. For example, Peter Drucker argued that the focus of business is not to make a profit but to respond to customer needs. If this is done, everything else, including profits, will fall into place. Once the customer's needs have been determined, Quality assurance through total quality Management focuses on planning for quality, using statistical quality control techniques, promoting team problem-solving, creating a culture for quality improvement, making quality a part of the entire organization, and integrating quality into every requirement.

According to Khurana and Raman 2004, 473), Quality Assurance cannot absolutely guarantee the production of qualit*y* products. Organizations are motivated to perform high quality services "in order to protect the firm's brand reputation and to avoid costly litigation." Reputation-

Table 3. Respondents' experience with the Project

			Respondent Category		Total
			Staff	Farmers	
Period dealt with the Organization	Less Than 3 yrs	Count	5	66	71
		Column %	50.0%	22.8%	23.7%
	4 - 6 yrs	Count	5	218	223
		Column %	50.0%	75.2%	74.3%
	7 - 8 yrs	Count		2	2
		Column %		.7%	.7%
	More Than 8 yrs	Count		4	4
		Column %		1.4%	1.3%
Total		**Count**	**10**	**290**	**300**
		Sample %	**3.3%**	**96.7%**	**100.0%**

Source: Primary data

Table 4. Factor Analysis results for Quality Assurance

	Quality Standards	Quality Enforcement
This organization has a well documented Quality Assurance manual	.789	
The Quality Assurance manual is implemented by all staff in the organization.	.902	
All the organization products meet the ISO certifications	.728	
The institution's products are all recommended by the UNBS	.688	
The Quality Assurance unit's responsibilities are clearly well defined	.764	
We are trained on following the documented procedure for maintaining, updating and tracking production procedures		.948
The Quality Assurance unit has authority to avoid farmer's fresh fruit bunches that do not meet acceptable quality standards		.904
The organization trains employees in acceptable Quality Assurance methods and practices		.634
Eigen Value	3.221	1.830
Variance%	40.267	22.873
Cumulative %	40.267	63.140

Source: Primary data

based explanations of service quality hold that assurance firms have an incentive to engage in high quality services in an effort to maintain and increase demand for their services (DeAngelo 1981; Wallace 1987, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative survey study conducted on staff of Kalangala Oil Palm Growers' project under The

Table 5. Correlation between the Variables

	Job Satisfaction	Employee Motivation	Quality Assurance	Organization Performance
Job Satisfaction	1.000			
Quality Assurance	.431**	.293*	1.000	
Organization Performance	.479**	.618**	.802**	1.000
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Primary data

Table 6. Regression analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.684	.169		4.054	.000
Job Satisfaction	.030	.050	.040	.587	.559
Quality Assurance	.828	.082	.662	10.120	.000
Dependent Variable: Organization Performance					
R Square	.802				
Adjusted R Square	.792				
F Statistic	79.798				
Sig.	.000				

Source: Primary data

Vegetable Oil Development Project and farmers from Kalangala district. The number of employees was 20 at the project and 1,173 farmers participating in producing oil palm.

Primary data was obtained by use of a self-administered questionnaire which was open and close ended designed for organizational staff (managers and field staff) and farmers, all of whom formed the core tools of collection.

Secondary data was obtained from the available literature review, text books, journals, reports, news papers and research magazines. On the other hand, Internet and libraries were also utilized as a significant source of secondary data.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires were developed for employees and famers of the oil palm project. Questionnaires were designed with both open and closed-ended questions.

The researcher used both open and closed-end questions. These were preferred because Open-ended questions develop trust, are perceived as less threatening, allow an unrestrained or free response, and are more useful with articulate users whereas closed-ended are Quick and require little time investment, just the answer. The purpose of the questionnaires was to collect data regarding employee motivation, job satisfaction, quality assurance and organizational performance.

Measurement of variables

Job satisfaction was measured by Nancy and Mine (2004) which measures wage, working hours, working conditions, Career development, while Quality assurance was measured using the ISO 9001:2000 Model which measures customer satisfaction, fit for purpose and quality. Organizational Performance was measured using the International Development Research Centre and

Universal Management Group frame work which measures Effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and financial Viability.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical principles were considered while carrying out the study to ensure that bias is eliminated or minimized to a level that is not too insignificant to alter the true meaning of the information provided. Among the principles considered included; carefulness, respect for intellectual property where all secondary data was properly documented and referenced. The researcher also ensured respect for colleagues as regards to the information provided, non-discrimination, which allowed everybody to participate irrespective of gender, culture and religious attachment, carefulness in addressing issues, integrity, honesty and objectivity.

Validity and Reliability of instruments

Validity of instruments was determined using the Content Validity Index (CVI) and the Reliability of the instruments was examined in this study with the help of the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1946) to test for the internal consistence of the scales used to measure the variables.

The results in the table 1 above were presented for the purpose of establishing the degree to which the questionnaire items were both valid and reliable. Results showed that the questionnaire items used to gather the data were both valid and reliable since the Validity and the Reliability measures were above 0.6 in either case.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and correlation and regression analysis methods as seen in the next section.

FINDINGS

This section presents study findings.

Background characteristics

Background characteristics including level of education and experience were analyzed to understand the kind of respondents involved in the study as follows.

Level of Education and Respondent Category Distribution

The results in table below indicates the respondents' level of education

Level of education

Data were gathered and analyzed about respondents' levels of education. Table 2 presents the results.
In table 2 above, the research observed that the highest number of respondents did not have any formal education (32.7%) with 58.0% falling under the others category. However, all staff members have some formal education with 30% having degrees, 20% having post graduate and 50% others.

Respondents' experience with the Project

The period with which the respondents have been dealing with the project was capture to understand the respondents better as seen in table 3.
Table 3 above shows that most of the respondents (76.3%) have been dealing with the project for at least 4years and only 23.7% have been with the project for less than 3 years. When the respondents are separated in terms of staff and farmers, the research shows that75.2%, 22.8%, 7% and 1.4% of the farmers have dealt with the project for 4-6 years, Less than 3 years, 7-8 years and more than 8 years respectively. On the other hand 50% of staff has been with the project for less than 3 years and the other 50% have been around for 4-6 years.

Factor Analysis for Quality Assurance

Results for the analysis of quality assurance were as indicated in the table 4 below.
Table 4 shows that Quality standards explain 40.267% while quality enforcement accounts for 22.873% of Quality assurance. The factors to consider when addressing quality standards are; well documented quality assurance manual (.789), implementation of quality assurance manual by all staff in the organization (.902), products meeting ISO certification (.728), UNBS recommendation of products (.688) and clear responsibilities of Quality assurance unit (.764). In enforcing quality, the research found out that the most important factors to consider are; training staff in following documented procedures for maintaining, updating and tracking production procedures (.948),

Quality assurance unit having authority to avoid farmers' fresh fruit bunches that do not meet acceptable quality standards (.904) and training employees in acceptable quality assurance methods and practices (.634).

Relationships between the Variables

Results relating to the variables were examined using the Pearson (r) correlations. Two variables A and B are said to be positively related if an increment in A leads to an increase in B while these variables would be negatively related when an increment in a leads to a fall in B. table 5 presents correlation results.

The results in table 5 indicate a positive relationship between Job satisfaction and Quality Assurance (r = .431**, p<.01). Additionally, a positive relationship exists between quality assurance and organizational performance(r = .802**, p<.01). This indicates that if quality assurance policies were properly enforced in terms of good quality standards and enforcement, and job satisfaction promoted, there will be improved organizational performance.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to examine the level, to which Job Satisfaction and Quality Assurance determine the Organizational Performance, seen in table 6.

The regression model as indicated in table 6 above shows that Job Satisfaction and Quality Assurance have the potential to determine 79.2% of the Organizational Performance (Adjusted R Square = .792). The regression model was as well significant (Sig. <.01). Performance in terms ffbs improves by 1000tonnes, the 792tonnes increment will be a result of efforts towards Job Satisfaction, Employee Motivation and Quality Assurance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents a discussion of findings.

Level of Education and Respondent Category Distribution

The research observed that the highest number of respondents did not have any formal education (32.7%) with 58.0% falling under the others category. The reason for this is that agriculture in Uganda has been left for then non-educated. However, all staff members had some formal education with 30% having degrees, 20% having post graduate and 50% others. This is due to the fact that

to most formal jobs in Uganda need require people with formal education.

Respondents' experience with the Project

The findings show that 75.2%, 22.8%, 7% and 1.4% of the farmers have dealt with the project for 4-6 years, less than 3 years, 7-8 years and more than 8 years respectively. Few people have been with the project for at-least 7 years because of oil palm growing is a new idea in Uganda and there was negative publicity about the project in the beginning. 50% of staffs have been with the project for less than 3 years and the other 50% have been around for 4-6 years. The reason for this is that the project initially relied on the district staff before recruiting its own employees.

Frequency with which the project enforces Quality Assurance

When respondents were asked to comment on the frequency with which the project enforces quality assurance, 51.7% said that the project always enforces quality assurances, 39.3% said sometimes while 9.0% said the project rarely enforces quality assurance policies. This is because for any organization to have any meaningful quality assurance, process must be continuous.

Quality Assurance

The research found out that Quality standards explain 40.267% of quality assurance while quality enforcement accounts for 22.873%. This means that for any organization to achieve quality assurance, it should have quality standards and then ensure proper quality enforcement. To address quality standards an organization needs; a well documented quality assurance manual, implementation of quality assurance manual by all staff in the organization, produce products meeting ISO certification, get UNBS recommendation of products and state clear responsibilities of Quality assurance unit. In enforcing quality, the following should be addressed; training staff in following documented procedures for maintaining, updating and tracking production procedures, providing Quality assurance unit authority to avoid farmers' fresh fruit bunches that do not meet acceptable quality standards and training employees in acceptable quality assurance methods and practices.

Job Satisfaction

The research revealed that rewards explain 42.23% of

job satisfaction; autonomy explains 25.12% while social benefits explain 15.95%. This is because rewards enable employees to meet their needs, enabling them to be satisfied by their jobs. Autonomy and social benefits allows them to enjoy their jobs. The specific issues one needs to address when dealing with rewards are; measuring up to the employee expectations, fairness in promotions, leisure time allowed by the job. To address autonomy one needs to handle; willingness to take up the same job again if an employee given an option, freedom of choice of work method, physical working conditions and job security. And if you allowed employees to enjoy job and be able to recommend friends for a similar job and provide them with opportunities for social interactions, then social benefits that contributes towards job satisfaction would have been addressed.

Job satisfaction, Quality Assurance and Organizational Performance

The results indicated a positive relationship between Job satisfaction and Quality Assurance (r = .431**, p<.01) and quality assurance and organizational performance(r = .802**, p<.01). This means that if quality assurance policies were properly enforced in terms of good quality standards and enforcement, and job satisfaction promoted, there will be improved organizational performance. The reason for this is reduced wastage due to employees understanding quality assurance methods, total implementation of quality assurance by having contribution from all staff in the organization, and having authority to avoid inferior products ensures that farmers strive to meet acceptable quality standards to have their products sold.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicated a positive relationship between Job satisfaction and Quality Assurance (r = .431**, p<.01) and quality assurance and organizational performance(r = .802**, p<.01). This means that if quality assurance policies were properly enforced in terms of good quality standards and enforcement, and job satisfaction promoted, there will be improved organizational performance. For improved organizational performance, we recommend the following:

• Promote commitment of the top management to motivate employees and allocate resources for quality assurance. This is line with the works of (Crosby, 1989; Deming, 1986; Juran, 1989) who argue that improvement in quality through quality assurance reduces cost thereby improving organizational performance because waste is eliminated when things are done correctly the first time.

• Focus on specific techniques that help in achieving quality rather than on the system. It is also empathized that there is a need for the employee buy-in and participation to ensure quality assurance as responsibility of every one.

• Demming (1986) and Juran (1989) design trainings that motivate workers to turn the training into practice to improve quality and improve organization performance.

• The organization should not expect immediate results but a long term pay off. The organizations should not adopt methods that are not productive or compatible with its production system and personnel.

• Organizations should therefore motivate employees, ensure job satisfaction and carry out quality assurance as this will increase Organizational Performance.

• Ensure real valence for each outcome; as has been demonstrated earlier, the higher the value of the reward; the higher its likelihood for generating significant levels of motivation on the part of the employee. This will mean extending to the employee rewards of significant, rather than cosmetic value.

• Organizations should strive to motivate their employees, design the jobs to satisfy them, involve them in quality assurance and in the end will contribute towards improved organization performance.

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