

## Emerging Issues on the Performance of Ward Executive Officers in Tanzania

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<i>Abstract</i>	<i>Journal of Policy and Development Studies (JPDS)</i>
<p><i>For effective and speedy service delivery the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, 1982 established the ward system in urban areas. Wards Executive Officers (WEO) supervise all government activities and Ward Development Programs at the ward level. Despite the efforts made by the Government of Tanzania to ensure that the communities in the wards have access to quality services, wards still experience poor service delivery. This study aimed to investigate emerging issues affecting the performance of Ward Executive Officers in delivering services in the wards. The study was conducted at Morogoro Municipal Council and employed the qualitative technique. The data collection methods were in-depth interviews and documentary reviews. Qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Data were collected from 29 wards of Morogoro Municipal Council. Findings from the study indicated that inadequate human resources, financial resources, lack of career development, lack of training, and a poor working environment mostly influenced the performance of Ward Executive officers. The study recommends strengthening the availability of resources and a conducive environment for the effective performance of Ward Executive Officers.</i></p>	<p>Vol. 15. Issue 2 (2024) ISSN(p) 0189-5958 ISSN (e) 2814-1091 Home page <a href="https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds">https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds</a></p> <p><b>ARTICLE INFO:</b> <b>Keyword:</b> Ward Executive Officer, Local government, Performance</p> <p><b>Article History</b> Received 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 Accepted: 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2024</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v15i2.9">https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v15i2.9</a></p>

### 1. Introduction

Tanzania established Local Government Authorities (LGAs) under the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 Articles 145 and 146. The constitution mandates LGAs to provide social development and public service delivery, facilitate of maintenance of law and order, and promotion of local development under a participatory process. Articles 145 (i) established local government authorities in each region, district, urban area, and village in the United Republic, which shall be of the type and designation prescribed by law to be enacted by Parliament or by the House of Representatives. Article 146(i) provides the purpose of LGAs is to transfer authority to the people, power to participate and involve them in the planning and implementation of development programs within their respective areas. For effective and speedy service delivery the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, 1982 established the ward system in urban areas. It mandates the creation of ward committees which are required to expedient the implementation of decisions and policies of the urban authority, or for the economic and social development of the ward. The functions of a ward committee are to promote the establishment and development of cooperative enterprises and activities within the ward; to initiate or formulate and undertake any task, venture, or enterprise designed to ensure the welfare and well-being of the residents of the ward; to plan and coordinate the activities of and render assistance and

advice to the residents of the ward engaged in any activity or industry of any kind. This implies that the local government (Urban Authorities) act, of 1982 facilitates community involvement in development activities in a ward level. Wards Executive Officers (WEO) are responsible for supervising all government activities and Ward Development Programs at the ward level and submit a report to the Municipal Executive Director. Ward Executive Officers oversee all social services including health, education, environmental protection, agriculture, ensuring peace and security, and supervise Mtaa Executive Officers and Street chairperson to fulfill their responsibilities. Also, WEOs administer tax collection activities and advise the Wards Development Committee.

Local government in Tanzania is served with provisions for the effective implementation of their functions including service delivery, community development, revenue generation, and regulations. Standing Order 2009 Section G1 stipulates that it is the Government policy that Tanzania should be self-sufficient in trained and skilled human resources to manage its economy. A systematic approach should be employed by public institutions to build human capital capable of delivering services to the expectations of the citizens. Furthermore, the Public Service Standing Orders directs that all organizations including local government are required to design in-service training programs based on their identified training needs. Every organization shall make sufficient financial provision for training purposes in the annual budget. Public Service Standing Order 2009 stipulates that the normal channel of communication with the Local authorities on policy and administrative issues shall be through the Ministry responsible for Local Government and on personnel matters should be directed to the Director of a Local Government Authority concerned, provided that in all cases a copy of such communication shall be served to the Regional Administrative Secretary. The purpose of facilitating communication is to improve the performance of LGAs. The orders emphasize a team approach to problems in the Regions working through Regional Consultative Committees. Regional Consultative Committees interpret Government policies and provide a forum for the exchange of information with local government. No departure shall be made from ministerial policies which have been laid down unless the Minister concerned has so agreed. The procedure and manner to conduct the business of the Regional Consultative Committee are as provided for in the Regional Administration Act, Cap.97. The purpose of close cooperation is to enable the smooth implementation of development activities in the region.

Despite such provisions, the literature reveals that service delivery has not been satisfactory in the local government. The Annual General Report on the Regional Administration and Local Government Audit for the Financial Year 2021/22 reported that one of the key causes of poor service delivery was the lack of effective performance by local government. However, there is no evidence of assessment done specifically for issues affecting WEOs specifically in Morogoro municipality. The lack of effective service delivery at the ward level is a common phenomenon in Morogoro municipality. In this context, this article seeks to analyze emerging issues affecting the performance of Ward Executive officers in Morogoro municipality. The following section outlines the theories underpinning this study and the methodology used followed by results and a discussion of challenges faced by Ward Executive Officers. Thereafter recommendations and conclusions are presented and discussed.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.1 Resource Based Theory***

The study was underpinned by the resource-based view (RBV) theory, which holds that resources are the main source of competitive advantage for organizations. A Resource-Based Theory is used to bring to attention the importance of resources in the organization. The theory is based on the assumption that an organization's resources are determining factors for improving the performance of the organization. The assumption is that the effectiveness of the WEOs is caused by the presence of the required resources in their respective wards. The theory has shown that the required resources by organizations include funds, qualified human resources, technology capacity, inputs, and the loyalty of the customers. Therefore, given the importance of resources in the performance of WEO, this theory is linked to this study. Therefore, this study focused on establishing resources influencing the performance of WEOs in Wards and bridging the existing gap in the literature while attempting to uncover issues affecting service delivery to the community. Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the importance of resources in supporting Wards Executive Officers' performance. This led to answering the

research question of this study; what are the organizational resources needed to improve the performance of the Ward Executive Officers in Morogoro municipality?

## **2.2 Expectancy Theory**

The theoretical aspect of this article is also based on Expectancy Theory for employee performance. Vroom's (1964), introduced the Expectancy Theory which assumes that individuals are motivated to perform if they know that their performance is recognized and rewarded. Furthermore, the Expectancy Theory is based on the assumption that the strength of a tendency to act in a specific way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. Expectancy theory argues that an employee can be motivated to perform better when there is a belief that the performance will lead to good performance appraisal and shall result in the realization of personal goals in the form of some reward future events. The theory focuses on efforts and performance relationships, performance and reward relationships, and rewards and personal goal relationships. For performances to be enhanced, managers ought to come up with systems where reward and performance work together. They also sought to make sure that the reward offered was deserved by the one receiving it. Hence its relevance to this study specifically on the compensation practices on the WEO's performance.

## **3. Methodology**

The study was conducted in the Morogoro Municipal Council in Morogoro Region in Tanzania. Morogoro Municipal Council was purposively selected due to poor service delivery in some wards. The study adopted a case study design and qualitative methods was involved. Twenty-nine WEOs were purposively selected from twenty-nine wards and eight (5) were heads of departments as key informants. Purposive sampling was used in selecting heads of departments who were the key informants. The key informants were selected based on their knowledge and information on the challenges faced by WEOs in delivering services in their specific wards. The in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants and WEOs and information on emerging issues encountered by WEOs was discussed. The documentary review was done by reviewing the Annual General Report on the audit of Regional Administration and Local Government for the Financial year 2021/22, the Morogoro Municipal Strategic Plan of 2017/2018-2021/2022, and the Public Service Standing Order of 2009. The study employed a grounded theory approach. This approach conformed with Deterding and Waters (2021), who reason that the grounded theory approach was developed based on research with a small number of interviews, and which is therefore capable of analysis by the researchers themselves.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Shortage of Staff and Skills

In implementing ward development activities competence is highly needed for the success of the ward plans. Competence entails behavior, knowledge, and skills that enable employees to perform effectively and efficiently activities in the organization (Kinemo, 2020). It was found that the wards in the municipality lacked the right personnel with the required skills and competencies to carry out the identified targets. It was revealed that in some wards there was a shortage of Community Development officers, Livestock Officers, Agricultural officers, Education officers, and Street Executive Officers. For instance, in some streets, Street Executive Officers have to serve other streets in the municipality where there is a vacancy. One of the respondents explained that:

*“The problem we are facing is lack of required qualified staff who are needed in the wards and streets and this affects service delivery to the community.”*

The documentary reviewed showed that According to the Standing Orders D.4, no appointments may be made, whether temporary or otherwise, for which no provision has been made in the estimates. Furthermore, no increase in the number of posts may be made above the authorized establishment without prior approval of the Permanent Secretary (Establishments) even if the salaries for any such additional posts can be met from the amount of money provided in the Estimates. This implies that the institutional framework that insists on seeking permission from the central government to recruit constrains the performance of WEOs due to delays or denial of more staff in the wards. Furthermore, according to the Municipal Strategic Plan of 2017/2018-2021/2022, the municipality has inadequate office accommodation and working facilities, delays in the release of funds from the central government, and Inadequate working tools, and incentive packages. The result concurs with other scholars who argue that organizational resources are important during the implementation of the organizational plan (Gachua, & Mbugua. 2016).

### 4.2 Inadequate training

Training is the act of providing individuals with targeted skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve their performance as well as productivity within their existing job responsibilities. Structured learning activities and experiences are implemented to enhance job-related skills and capacities (Noe, 2017). Training and development contribute positively towards organizational growth. Most organizations consider training and development as an important factor in human resource activity. Training can be used as a tool to increase employee performance by developing knowledge and skills. Findings have shown that very rarely training was conducted for WEO. One of the respondents complained that

*Since I was employed as WEO I have never been trained on anything about my job description. For WEO to perform better, there is a need to invest more in capacity-building for us.*

The Public Standing Order of 2009 in its General Policy Regarding Training Section G1 states that Tanzania should be self-sufficient in trained and skilled human resources to manage its economy. A systematic approach should be employed by public institutions to build human capital capable of delivering services to the expectations of the citizens. Such an approach should take cognizance of growing public-private partnerships and long-term training and development plans of the organizations. All organizations are required to draw up specific in-service training programs based on their identified training needs. The provision also emphasizes that every organization should make sufficient financial provisions for training purposes in the annual budget. Based on this standing order municipalities are responsible for planning and conducting induction and orientation programs which will provide WEOs with knowledge, and legislation about public service and local government careers. Organizations that have implemented strong programs of training and development for their workforce tend to realize better performance from the workers besides the organization's performance (Aleem & Bowra, 2020). However, findings revealed that very rare WEOs are provided with training. Key informants revealed that lack of training was attributed to the under-release of funds to LGAs by the central government.

### 4.3 Working environment

The working environment in the public sector plays an important role in the implementation of development activities. It is well known that the quality of the employee's work environment has an influence on the employee's motivation and eventually performance. Based on the interviews done with the WEOs it was found that the working environment in the wards and streets was challenging due to limited offices, transport facilities, and working tools for the majority of WEOs. The lack of a conducive environment in the wards has caused difficulties in delivering services to the communities. This is an indication that the constraints that are faced by the WEOs affect the service delivery in the wards. It was also found that the lack of vehicles for monitoring and evaluating planned activities affected the implementation of the ward development plans. These findings suggest that the working environment of the WEOs is not satisfactory. The absence of a positive work environment makes WEOs feel demotivated and undervalued when their efforts and achievements are not appreciated. This situation makes WEOs uncomfortable in performing their duties. The study results suggest that WEOs often work in an unsupportive environment which impact negatively their performance and job satisfaction. Impliedly it means that the work environment of WEOs should include required equipment, safe physical space, and well-designed organized offices.

The response from one of the interviewees said that:

*...We have the office but the environment surrounding us is not conducive to motivating us in performing activities. We need a good office with a conducive environment to influence us to perform our duties. Sometimes I wish to terminate my employment just because the environment is not friendly to me"*

Furthermore, while interviewing one Ward Executive Office responded the following:

*The working conditions of my office do not allow employees to work comfortably. We do not have enough furniture to be used by staff in this office, even when customers come here to get services they have no place to sit to hear their problems.*

According to Sedarmyanti & Rahmawanti, (2017) the work environment is the totality of tools and materials encountered in the surrounding environment where a person works, their work methods, and work arrangements both as individuals and in groups. The employee work environment is one of the factors that can influence work productivity. The physical work environment is all physical conditions found around the workplace that can affect employees either directly or indirectly. Findings have shown that comfortable environmental condition for WEOs influences them to work more enthusiastically, as well as increase their concentration power to complete their work. A bad working environment for WEOs can cause a feeling of discomfort at work which can lead to decreased motivation while working. This means that the work environment is directly related to the work processes carried out by employees at work (Manullang, 2019).

### 4.4 Inadequate Financial Ability

The interviews with WEOs indicated that municipal wards had inadequate funds for the implementation of the ward activities. It was found that the inadequacy of funds in the wards limited the implementation of its plans and service delivery in the wards. The underlying problem of poor implementation of some ward plans was due to the municipality's financial constraints. The inadequacy of financial ability was attributed to a limited development budget and insufficient sources of revenues which have led to poor service delivery in the wards. The findings above indicated that the inadequacy of funds affected service delivery in the wards. For instance, Nkosi, (2015) in his study observed that lack of adequate financial resources was a significant challenge in plan implementation in municipalities which impliedly influenced WEO in their duties. Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that in reality, the local government authorities are financially incapable as their budget depends on intergovernmental transfers to fund their activities which is not adequate. The centralization of some sources of revenue has limited the capacity of the municipality to implement ward activities. Interviews with key informants revealed that there were delays in the disbursement of development grants from the Central Government for the implementation of development projects. It was also found that the amount that was supposed to be disbursed by the central government to the municipality was not disbursed or disbursed in small amounts (Kinemo,2020). The inadequate financial ability of the

wards affected the implementation of ward development activities. The findings from key informant interviews implied that when a ward in a municipality is allocated limited funds, it means that there is an inadequate amount of funds to cater for development activities in a ward. Furthermore, limited funds can also impact negatively WEOs' supervision of Ward Development Programs and overseeing all social services including health, education, environmental protection, agriculture, and ensuring peace and security. Several wards have ranked high in Morogoro municipality due to a lack of funds for development activities. For instance, according to the Municipal Strategic Plan of 2017/2018-2021/2022, extreme poverty levels have spread in some wards including Chamwino Ward, Bigwa Ward, Kichangani Ward, Mwembesongo Ward, Mafisa Ward, Kauzeni Ward, Mkundi Ward, and Magadu Ward.

#### **4.5 Under collection of own sources revenue**

The findings from the interviews with key informants revealed that wards are not funded for development projects by their municipality due to a shortage of funds. It was found that the Morogoro municipality remits a small amount of funds to WEOs for stationery purposes only and not for development plans due to a shortage of funds. One of the reasons for the shortage of funds was inefficiency in the collection of revenue. Morogoro municipality possesses substantial sources of revenue, including levies, licenses, fees, fines, penalties and forfeits, revenue from exchange transactions, and other revenues. Efficient revenue collection is important for the development of Wards in Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to fund investments in human capital, infrastructure, and improved ward service delivery. Based on the CAG assessment of the process of revenue collection in LGAs, several weaknesses were identified. Annual General Report on the audit of Regional Administration and Local Government for the financial year 2021/22 reported that one of the key causes of poor service delivery was under collection of own sources of revenue by collecting Agents, which hindered efforts to implement planned activities in the wards. For example, the audit review of revenue collections revealed that revenue was not collected, specifically from rental charges for shops and houses located at the Council's bus stands and markets, market stalls, sale of plots, agriculture produce cess, liquor licenses, levy for extraction of construction materials, business license, and service levy.

#### **4.6 Unsatisfactory compensation**

The interviews established that all WEOs were not satisfied with the compensations they received specifically on their salary and benefits. Unfair amount of salary and benefits for their work led them to be dissatisfied and demotivated. This finding is consistent with research by Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2015), whose study revealed workers want their performance to be correlated with the benefits they get from the organization. Employees establish expectations for incentives and remuneration if specified levels of performance are met. These expectations define future goals or levels of achievement. Based on expectancy theory, it can be expected that, if the municipality provides compensations and rewards desired by the WEOs in question, the employee is more likely to perform. While interviewing one WEO responded the following;

*On my side, the salary I get does not reflect what I perform and is not adequate to fulfill all my needs of mine.*

A study conducted by Hailemariam et al. (2019) shows a positive relationship between compensation with workers performance. According to Khudhair et al. (2020), several studies in the past have established that there is firm relation between compensation and rewarding strategies with workers' performance. Khudhair et al. (2020) found a significant link between staff performance and rewards provided by the organizations. Specifically, the studies reported that salaries, allowance, rewards, and non-financial compensations largely contribute to the performance of employees. Similar outcomes were found in a quantitative study performed by Darma and Supriyanto (2017) for identifying influence of compensation in relation to worker performance. In the study, compensations and rewards like salaries, recognition, promotions, and allowances were assessed and found to be substantially influencing workers' perspective towards completion of tasks assigned to them. The findings showed that proper compensations to WEOs plays a key role with regards to improving performance in the wards. All these studies imply that WEO's performance is not satisfactory due to poor compensation practices such as proper salary, allowances, and other fringe benefits.

## 4.7 Career development

All twenty-nine of the WEOs revealed that there was no possibility of career development in their post. The career development process is useful in identifying employee's skills and experience and assigning them tasks accordingly. Individuals prefer to join those organizations where they get opportunities for career advancement (Gardener et al., 2011). Career planning serves as a tool to motivate employees to work effectively and efficiently to achieve the goals of the organization. Organizations with robust development initiatives provide resources for employees to manage their careers and offer possibilities for promotions and advancement (Saks,2021). Ahmed et al. (2020) suggested that career growth and development opportunities can be considered one of the practices that can increase employee engagement. Within the context of wards in the local government, a lack of development programs and learning opportunities for WEOs leads to poor service delivery. Impliedly it means that, when WEOs are given opportunities for career development they will tend to perform effectively in their respective wards. According to Social Exchange Theory, when WEOs perceive that career development practice in their respective wards could improve their well-being, they would feel obligated and perform effectively. This is further supported by Aktar, (2018) who found that career advancement is significantly related to employee engagement. while interviewing one Ward Executive Office responded the following;

*....Aaaaah I have been working over the last 5 years however, one striking observation is the lack of career continuity in the work which in turn restricts my work growth.*

This implies that WEOs are demotivated at their workplace as a result of the absence of career development. According to Gomez (2010), career development practice is an ongoing, organized, and formalized effort that focuses on developing and enriching more capable employees.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that there is an inadequate number of staff and a lack of expertise in some fields in the wards as indicated in the findings. The working environment of WEOs in the wards was not conducive due to a lack of offices, transport, and working facilities. Fiscal autonomy is limited and controlled by the central government and budgetary deficit is a common feature in the municipality and this has affected the performance of WEOs. This paper recommends that the Morogoro municipality should put more emphasis on compensation practices offered and improve WEOs' compensations. The intergovernmental transfers of funds to Morogoro municipality should be made on time without delay for effective implementation of the ward's plan. The Ministry of Finance should ensure that the appropriated funds for recurrent grants are released as per the approved budget estimates otherwise wards in LGAs will face adversity in service delivery and ultimately fail to attain ward-planned activities. LGAs in coordination with Ward and Mtaa Executive officers institute strong internal control systems to ensure effective collection of the revenues to enable WEOs to implement development plans. Morogoro municipality should train WEOs frequently to acquire new skills and expand their knowledge base. Lastly, the study recommends that opportunities for career advancement for WEOs should be provided to serve as a tool to motivate WEOs to deliver services effectively.

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