

EFFECTS OF TANGIBLE REWARDS TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, CHUKA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to establish how tangible rewards can be used to improve service delivery in public institutions in Tharaka Nithi County.

Methodology:

This study employed descriptive research design was used. Descriptive design was chosen for this study due to the fact that it captured raised opinions and views held at the time of the research. Stratified random sampling method was used to stratify the institution into 12 departments and divisions. The target population for the study was all (236) employees of Chuka university main campus. The middle and senior management totaling to 28 were also considered in the research.

Results: Results revealed that tangible rewards is statistically significant in improving service delivery in public institutions in Tharaka Nithi county. explaining organization performance of listed companies. Out of the 52 respondents, 39 were in strong agreement with the statement that rewarding is one way of motivating employees which helps improve service delivery.

Policy recommendation: The study recommends the management to put in place the appropriate measures that will ensure that all the employees have equal chances of being rewarded for a job well done. The study further recommends the institution to make use of the applicable tangible rewards such as awarding voucher, gifts, cash bonus to improve service delivery.

Keywords: *Tangible rewards, Service delivery, public Institutions*

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

2. Background to the Study

Around the world, all levels of government and public sector organizations are facing pressures from financial crises to constituent upheaval, to rapidly urbanizing populations. Public services in developing countries are very poorly delivered. The vast majority of the population is dependent upon public services and the human and economic cost of this failure is potentially very large, Eschleman, & Wang (2010). Hence public organizations have to attract and retain people who are motivated to work for the sector.

According to Schultz & Schultz (2010), the British labour government introduced what was referred to as the mistrust model in 2000. The model assumed that employees could not be trusted to carry out their duties effectively unless there was an external intervention. These interventions included non-financial gains, such as promotions, paid trainings, flexible working hours among others for a job well done. The otherwise could also be applied for failure to deliver. This worked so well in the public sector and greatly reduced waiting time and generally improved service delivery, Schultz & Schultz (2010).

In South Africa, the public sector has moved services closer to the people by giving more authority to the municipalities to deliver those services. Here the concept of Batho Pele is applied which means people first. Batho Pele is set out in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Government Gazette No 18340) dated 1 October 1997. This White Paper advocates that departments deliver responsive quality services according to eight national service delivery principles; referred to as the Batho Pele principles. The ultimate aim of this public service delivery transformation initiative in South Africa is to improve service delivery and emphasize the criticality of a customer or citizen focused ethos in public service delivery and monitoring. To achieve this, the government is focusing on using intangible incentives such as recognition to motivate its employees so that they can give quality service to its citizens, Eschleman, & Wang (2010).

In the last 20 years, Kenya's public institutions have undergone a number of changes. Some of these changes include employee rationalization leading to wage bill reduction, performance improvement, structural adjustment programme after aid cuts, and the institutionalization of results-based management. From 1993 to 2002, the Government retrenched more than 100,000 civil servants but had only a negligible impact on the effectiveness or efficiency of the civil service. Later, between 2006 and 2008, the Government decided to shift the public service towards a results-orientation approach by introducing and facilitating the development and management of a holistic Results-Based Management system through the 'Results for Kenya' programme. The aim was to enhance performance efficiency in all government ministries, departments and agencies. It also meant to reverse the negative image of the public service, Paul, (2009).

In 2009, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the Kenyan government to step up public sector reforms to focus on national transformation. The Rapid Results approach, launched in more than 38 ministries, 175 local authorities and more than 10 State corporations, has improved service delivery in several areas, such as the processing and issuance of passports, national identity cards and birth certificates. The state law office's company registry, for example, following use of rapid results approach, has improved staff and customer satisfaction levels by 80 per cent in about 100 days. This has reduced the time taken to register businesses from three weeks to one day and has helped reduce a backlog of 500,000 Annual Returns and other documents (Mbugua, Ndeke, & Ogola, 2012).

Paul (2009) points out that given that many people are attracted to public service work by the incentive to serve and make a positive difference in others' lives, it is essential that what is referred to as 'the line of sight' between their values and the task they are required to fulfill in the organization is not lost. While clearly this is more feasible in service delivery work, showing all employees how their contribution matters to the overall objectives of the organization is critical to maintaining their sense of motivation hence service delivery. At a basic level, aligning incentives with intrinsic motivations is an important element in managing the public institutions work environment. Use of non monetary incentives to improve service delivery in public institutions is an important topic of study because it matters that the public service can attract, retain and motivate employees who are capable of delivering on the complex objectives of the public service.

Public learning institutions are the backbone of education in Kenya, since a majority cannot afford to attend the private learning institutions. Maximum productivity in these institutions is relatively not achieved. The employees' capacity is not utilized to the optimal. Optimal productivity enables organizations to cut cost and be able to provide quality services. Quite often the public learning institutions

may have laxity in teaching and content coverage, Musungu & Nasongo (2008). This results in the institutions producing graduands who are not fully trained and equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge. This results in what Allen and Cale (2013) refer to as the multiplier effect; however the effect will be retrogressive.

Service quality is a critical determinant of competitiveness and a proxy measure and key determinant of value for money in all institutions especially; with the rampant competition brought about by the upsurge of numerous private institutions in the industry. Quality service in both the core functions and non core functions is an important factor in the success of these institutions. It can help an institution to differentiate itself from others and through it gain a lasting competitive advantage. A research carried out by Oscar W.Deshields Jr.,Ali Kara and Erdener Kaynak in 2005 on Determinants of business student satisfaction and retention in higher education: applying Herzberg's two-factor theory, revealed that the role of satisfaction and client orientation played a very important role in the success of the learning institutions. Thus service quality can further be regarded as a key antecedent to successful customer relationships, and to improved economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Sagimo, 2002). Despite the importance of motivation in attaining service quality, the concept is not well developed in the public sector and especially the learning institutions

Chuka University being a public institution and a learning institution also faces similar challenges like others. There is satisfactory service delivery, however due to changing client needs and the intensive competition from other learning institutions; continuous improvement on service delivery becomes a core requirement to succeed and excel. The institution mainly applies monetary incentives such as a competitive salaries and wages, overtime compensation among other employment packages. However as the employees settle down and get used to the monetary incentives, these incentives that initially attracted them to join the work force ceases to be inputs for service delivery. With economic pressure to manage cost, the employer cannot keep on raising salaries and other monetary benefits in order to motivate the employees. But yet still it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the employees are motivated and giving the best service to the clients. This triggered the researcher to settle on the study; how non monetary incentives can be used to improve service delivery in public institutions in Tharaka Nithi County.

2. Statement of the problem

Public higher education institutions are continuously recognizing that they are in the service industry and are so far focusing on putting greater emphasis on the service provided to their clients, the students (Deshields et. al., 2005). Deshields et. al., (2005) further adds that “this becomes even more important in the states where universities utilize tuition based model and there is rapid expansion of colleges and universities” hence posing heavy competition. With the intense today’s competitive education market forces, higher learning institutions need to embrace a market orientation strategy to differentiate themselves from the competitors. With the learning institutions having more or less the same infrastructure, the clients (students) may not base their decisions on the infrastructure. Hence the best way of differentiating one institution from the others is by gauging the service delivered. From the marketing perspective the ‘people’ aspect is a major determinant of success of service institutions. Hence for learning institutions they can achieve excellent service by ensuring that the service deliverers do it to the best of their capability.

Chuka University being a public institution and a learning institution also faces similar challenges like others. There is satisfactory service delivery, however due to changing client needs and the intensive competition from other learning institutions; continuous improvement on service delivery becomes a core requirement to succeed and excel. The institution mainly applies monetary incentives such as a competitive salaries and wages, overtime compensation among other employment packages. However as the employees settle down and get used to the monetary incentives, these incentives that initially attracted them to join the work force ceases to be inputs for service delivery. With economic pressure to manage cost, the employer cannot keep on raising salaries and other monetary benefits in order to motivate the employees. But yet still it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the employees are motivated and giving the best service to the clients. This triggered the researcher to settle on the study; Effect of tangible rewards to improve service delivery in public institutions in Tharaka Nithi County.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To establish the effect of tangible rewards on service delivery in Chuka university.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Theoretical framework

The researcher applied two theories. One of them is the Self-determination theory by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. According to Wendy & Mary (2006), since the early seventies Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan have conducted research that eventually led to the proposition of the self-determination theory (SDT). This theory focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined. SDT identifies three innate needs that, if satisfied, allow optimal function and growth. These are competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The three psychological needs motivate one to initiate specific behavior and mental nutrients that are essential for psychological health and well-being. When these needs are satisfied, there are positive consequences, such as well-being and growth, leading people to be productive, happy and give the best service ever. When they are thwarted people's productivity and service delivery go down, Wendy & Mary (2006).

There are three essential elements to the theory which are: humans are inherently proactive with their potential and mastering their inner forces (such as drive and emotions); Humans have an inherent tendency towards growth, development and integrated functioning; Optimal development and actions are inherent in humans but they do not happen automatically. The employees in any institution have an inner potential that when developed through training and job rotation can yield competence hence high quality services. Relatedness can be achieved through recognition and rewards whereby a reward after a good service is delivered or recognition will enable an employee to relate the two. Flexible working hours yields freedom, and with freedom people are enthusiastic in delivering the service, Wendy & Mary (2006). Hence employees are able to achieve autonomy by working at their own time of choice and being their own bosses especially when they work from home, Dwivedi (2009).

Another theory is the acquired needs theory by McClellan and Atkinson. Some needs are acquired as a result of life experiences. These needs include need for achievement to accomplish something difficult; need for affiliation by forming close personal relationships and need for power to control others, Michael (2011). Studies show those who have a high need for achievement prefer moderate levels of risk, seek feedback, and are likely to immerse themselves in their work. The theory is referred to as Need for Achievement because these individuals are theorized to be the most effective employees and leaders in the workplace, offering high quality service. These individuals strive to achieve their goals and advance in the

organization. They tend to be dedicated to their work and strive hard to succeed. Such individuals also demonstrate a strong desire for increasing their knowledge and for feedback on their performance, often in the form of performance appraisal. The theory is applicable since the non financial incentives can work best in individuals who have higher level needs such as the need for achievement since they will feel highly satisfied after delivering high quality services, Michael (2011).

4: Empirical literature

Research has shown that a business's ongoing success depends; to a large extent on having employees who are productive and creative to deliver superior services. To achieve quality services, an organisation does not have to consume thousands of cash, employees can be motivated to deliver quality services using less costly incentives which are non monetary. So it is important to understand the link between non monetary incentives and service delivery. Equally important, is how to manage employees' performance and reward them, not just in terms of salary, but through recognition and other incentives. Employees who are expecting an incentive are likely to go that extra distance for the institution's clients and ensure they receive quality service. But offering relevant incentives is not quite enough; one also should also monitor the effectiveness of the incentives (Pollitt et al., 2004).

Schaufeli & Bakker (2010) argue that organizational reward systems have a significant impact on employees' level of service delivery. Rewards can be either tangible or intangible. In most cases the intangible rewards are non monetary consuming little or no money at all. Important forms of intangible rewards include praise, recognition and workplace opportunities. Intangible rewards are ones from which an employee does not derive any material gain. Such rewards have the greatest impact when they soon follow the desired behavior and are closely tied to their output in terms of the service they provide to the clients. Pollitt, et al. (2004) clarifies that if an organization wants to use praise or other intangible rewards effectively, praise should be offered for a high level of performance and for things that the employee has control over. Some studies have shown that praise can be as effective as tangible rewards.

Other forms of non monetary rewards or incentives include status symbols, such as a spacious office, increased autonomy and freedom. Increased autonomy demonstrates trust in an employee, and may decrease occupational stress and improve job satisfaction. A 2010 study by Bowling, Eschleman, & Wang, found a positive relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, happiness, positive effect, and the absence of negative effect which may also be interrelated with service delivery.

Numerous studies have concluded that for people with satisfactory salaries, some nonfinancial incentives are more effective than extra cash in building long-term employee engagement in most sectors, job functions, and business contexts, (Wendy & Mary, 2006). Many financial rewards mainly generate short-term boosts of energy, which can have damaging unintended consequences, (Bowling, et al., 2010). Indeed, the economic crisis, with its imperative to reduce costs and to balance short- and long-term performance effectively, gives business leaders a great opportunity to reassess the combination of financial and nonfinancial incentives that will serve their companies best through and beyond the downturn, asserts Wendy & Mary (2006).

According to a survey named McKinsey Quarterly survey 2 by Perry, et al. (2008) the respondents viewed three noncash incentives to be same or even more effective than the three highest-rated financial incentives namely cash bonuses, increased base pay, and gratuities. These non cash incentives included praise from immediate managers, leadership attention (for example, one-on-one conversations), and a chance to lead projects or task forces. The survey's top three nonfinancial incentives played critical roles in making

employees feel that their companies valued them, took their well-being seriously, and strived to create opportunities for career growth and in return the quality of their service had greatly improved.

David & Cary (2009) notes that the money's traditional role as the dominant incentive to provision of quality services by employees is under pressure from declining corporate revenues, sagging stock markets, and increasing scrutiny by regulators, activist shareholders, and the general public. Hence many companies have to cut remuneration costs. Organizations face the challenge of retaining talented people amid morale-sapping layoffs that tend to increase voluntary turnover (Dilip & Timothy, 2008), hence the urgent need to give incentives to employees who will provide superb services tirelessly. Often, top performers are the first to leave the organisation, (David & Cary, 2009).

Michael (2011) point out that many organizations haven't made more use of cost-effective nonfinancial incentives at a time when cash is hard to find. One reason may be that many executives hesitate to challenge the traditional managerial wisdom that money is what really counts. While executives themselves may be equally influenced by other things, they still think that bonuses are the dominant incentive for most people. Managers see achieving quality services in terms of the size of the compensation. Another reason is probably that nonfinancial incentives require more time and commitment from senior managers. This lack of interaction between managers and their people creates a highly damaging void that saps employee engagement, Michael (2011).

Financial incentives can be applied when companies are experiencing profitable moment. While such rewards certainly have an important role to play, business leaders would do well to consider the lessons of the crisis and think broadly about the best ways to engage and inspire employees. A talent strategy that emphasizes the frequent use of the right nonfinancial incentives would benefit most companies in bleak times and fair times. By acting now, they could exit the downturn stronger than they entered it, (David & Cary, 2009). Thus such programs are more valuable than ever in a recession.

There's a risk associated with rewards, however. Charles Jacobs, in his book *Management Rewired* (2010) argues that when managers dangle monetary rewards, employee quality of work can actually suffer. It all has to do with how our brains are wired, he says. "When we're focused on the work we're doing now, an area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens releases dopamine, which pumps us up and gets the brain working quickly" Charles adds. Focusing on an extrinsic reward, though, rather than work can be counterproductive, according to Charles (2010), as it diverts the brain's bandwidth from the task at hand. "We like rewards and they work," Charles says. "But rewards can distract us". Extrinsic rewards are clearly not a panacea; the psychological lift that employees get from doing work that matters to them can be just as valuable, (Charles, 2010).

4.3. Tangible rewards and service delivery

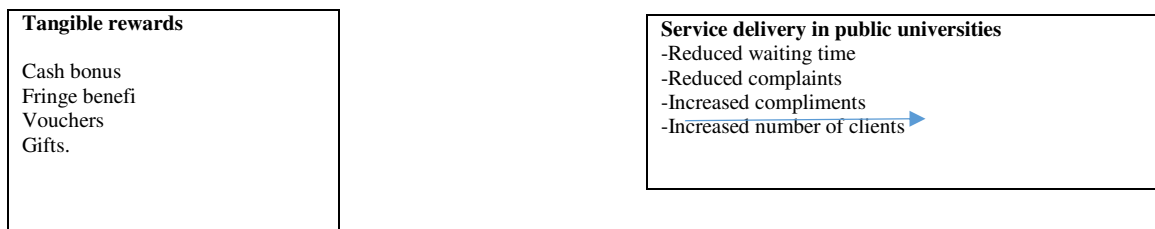
According to James & Edward (2006), extrinsic rewards are the tangible rewards which are not necessarily financial given to employees by managers, such as gifts, spacious offices, and other status symbols. They are called "extrinsic" because they are external to the work itself and other people control their size and whether or not they are granted. In contrast, intrinsic rewards are psychological rewards that employees get from doing meaningful work and performing it well.

Tangible rewards played a dominant role in earlier eras, when work was generally more routine and bureaucratic, and when complying with rules and procedures was paramount. This work offered workers

few intrinsic rewards, so that extrinsic rewards were often the only incentives available to organizations, Armstrong & Murlis (1998). Pay is an important consideration for most workers in accepting a job, and unfair pay can be a strong de-motivator leading to poor service delivery. However, after people have taken a job and issues of unfairness have been settled, we find that extrinsic rewards are now less important, as day-to-day service delivery is more strongly driven by intrinsic rewards, (Armstrong & Murlis, 1998)

Reward strategies determine the level and mix of financial and non-financial rewards required to attract, retain and encourage individuals with the skills, abilities and competence necessary to provide quality services. Not all tangible rewards come in the form of money. Some companies host free lunches, or give away company gear to good workers, Schultz, Duane, & Sydney (2010).

4.4 conceptual frame work



Conceptual frame work figure 1

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Target population

A population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having some common characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population is the focus of interest where the researcher intends to capture the intended information. It is the totality of all elements under the study. Thus the target population for the study was all (236) employees of Chuka university main campus. The middle and senior management totaling to 28 were also considered in the research. Hence the total population for the study was 264, broken down as shown in table 5.1 and 5.2.

Table 5.1: Employees target population

Department/division	population
i) Administration	12
ii) Academic	128
iii) Catering	14
iv) Finance/ accounting	8
v) Transport/ security	11
vi) Procurement	8
vii) Human resource	10
viii) Public relations	3
ix) ICT	8
x) Estate /farm management	9
xi) Hospital	13
xii) Accommodation	12
Total	236

Source: (Human Resource department – Chuka, 2014)

Table 5.2: Management categories

Level of management	Frequency	Percentage
Senior management	6	21
Middle level management	22	79
Total	28	100

Source: (Human Resource department – Chuka, 2014)

6 RESULTS FINDINGS

6.1 Employees should be given tangible rewards to improve service delivery in the institution

The researcher further wanted to establish the level of agreement with the statement that the employees should be given tangible rewards to improve service delivery in the institution.

Table 6.1 Employees should be given tangible rewards to improve service delivery in the institution

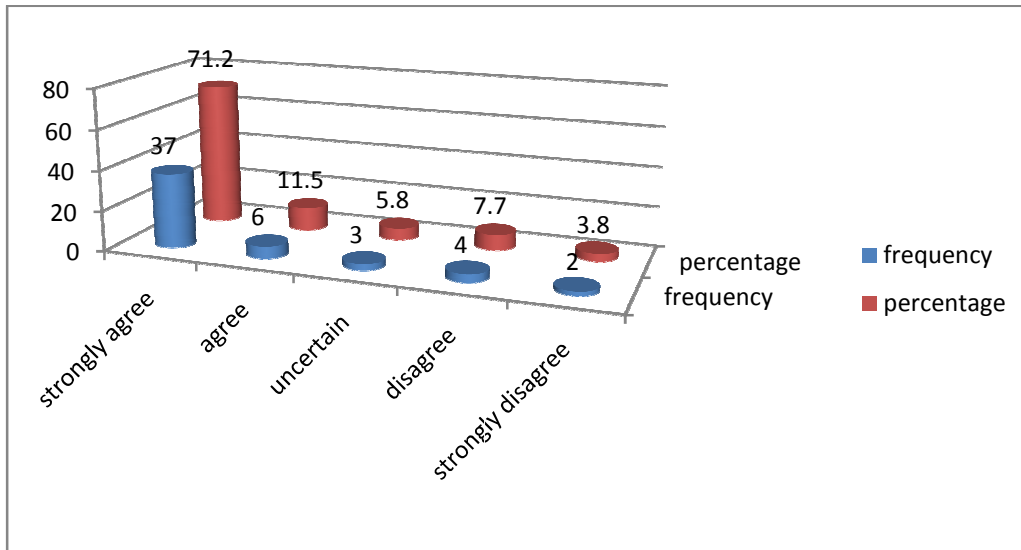
Level of agreement	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	36	69.2
Agree	7	13.5
uncertain	4	7.7
disagree	3	5.8
strongly disagree	2	3.8
Total	52	100.0

The majority who formed 69.2% strongly agreed with the statement, followed by 13.5% who agreed. Those who were uncertain came next at 7.7% which was closely followed by those who disagreed at 5.8%. Those who strongly agreed came last at 3.8%. tangible rewards include gifts, trips to tourism destination, among others. The employees indicate that if given these tangible rewards, the level of service would definitely improve.

6.2: A reward helps all employees to feel appreciated hence cases of poor service delivery are minimized

The researcher further wanted to establish the effect of rewards on service delivery. Figure 6.1 Indicates the responses to this effect.

Figure 6.1 Rewards helps all employees to feel appreciated hence cases of poor service delivery are minimized

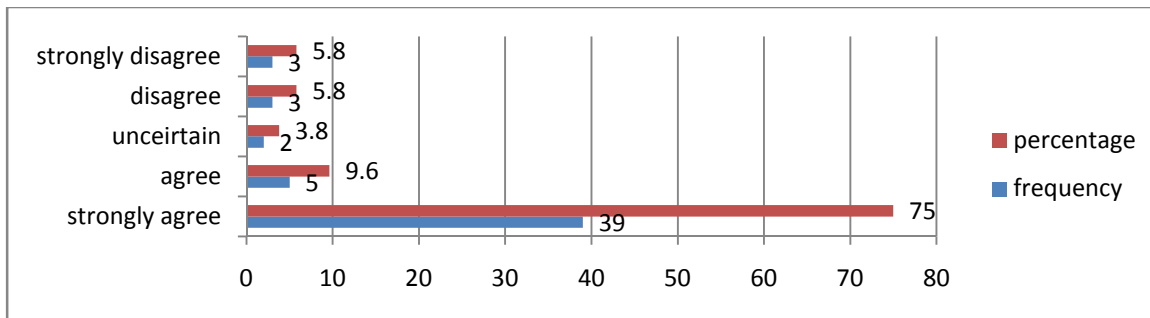


A bigger majority, 71.2% strongly agreed followed by 11.5% who agreed. Those who disagreed came next at 7.7% followed by those who were uncertain at 5.8%. Those who strongly agreed came last at 3.8%.

6.2: for an organization to maintain enthusiastic workforce it should reward frequently

Rewarding alone is not enough if done after a long duration of time. Hence the study sought to find the respondents level of agreement with the statement that to maintain enthusiastic workforce, an organization should reward frequently. The responses are indicated in figure 6.1

Figure 6.1 For an organization to maintain enthusiastic workforce it should reward frequently

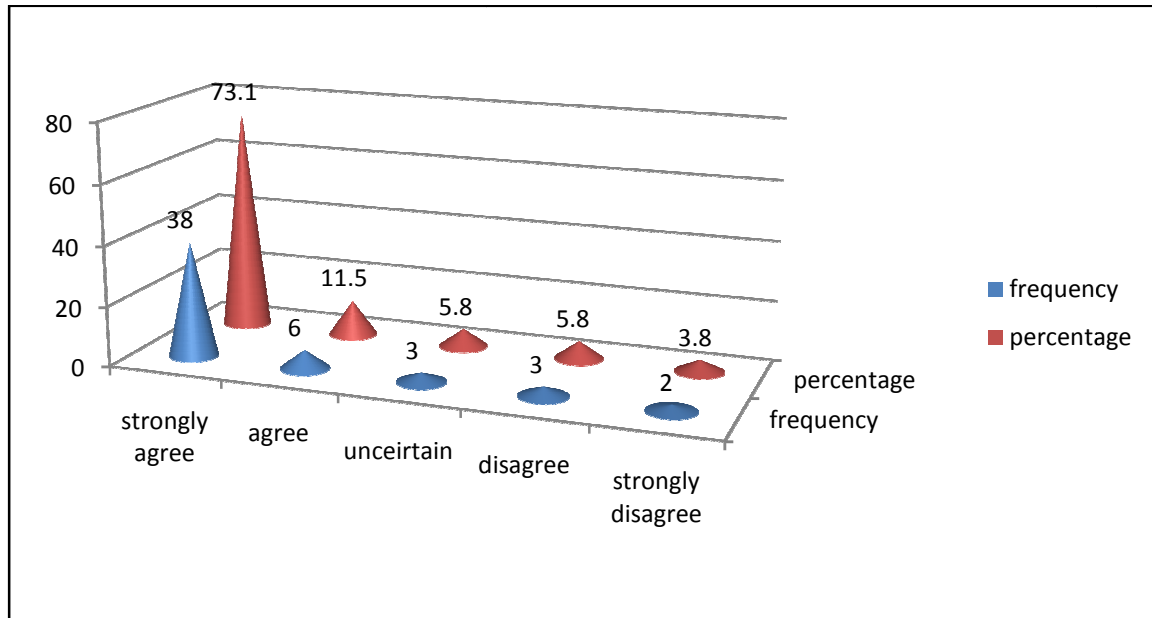


Seventy five percent strongly agreed with the statement that for an organization to maintain enthusiastic employee, it should reward frequently. This was closely followed by those who agreed at a distance with 9.6%. Those who strongly agreed and those who agreed tied at 5.8% while those who were uncertain came last at 3.8%. When rewarding is done after a long duration of period, the employees forget about it and it will only work in the short run or may not work at all since the time lapse will discourage the employees.

6.3 : monitoring and evaluation of employees jobs and rewarding minimizes chances of poor service delivery

The researcher wanted to find out the effect of monitoring and evaluating employees and its effect on service delivery. Figure 4.8 indicates the responses as received.

Figure 6.2: Monitoring and evaluation of employees jobs and rewarding minimizes chances of poor service delivery



A good majority (73.1%) of the respondents were in strong agreement with the statement that monitoring and evaluating employees and rewarding them improves service delivery. This was followed by 11.5% of those who agreed an next came those who agreed and those who were uncertain at 5.8%. Those who strongly agreed came last at 3.8%. Performance should not be a one off observation but rather it should be the total sum of continuous monitoring and evaluation of happenings. At times a one off observation may give the wrong judgment about an employee. Hence the need for making multiple observation and drawing judgment on them.

6.4 : Rewarding is one way of motivating employees which helps improve service delivery

The study further sought to find out the effect of using tangible rewards as a way of motivating the employees. The findings are as shown in table 6.3

Table 6.3 Rewarding is one way of motivating employees which helps improve service delivery

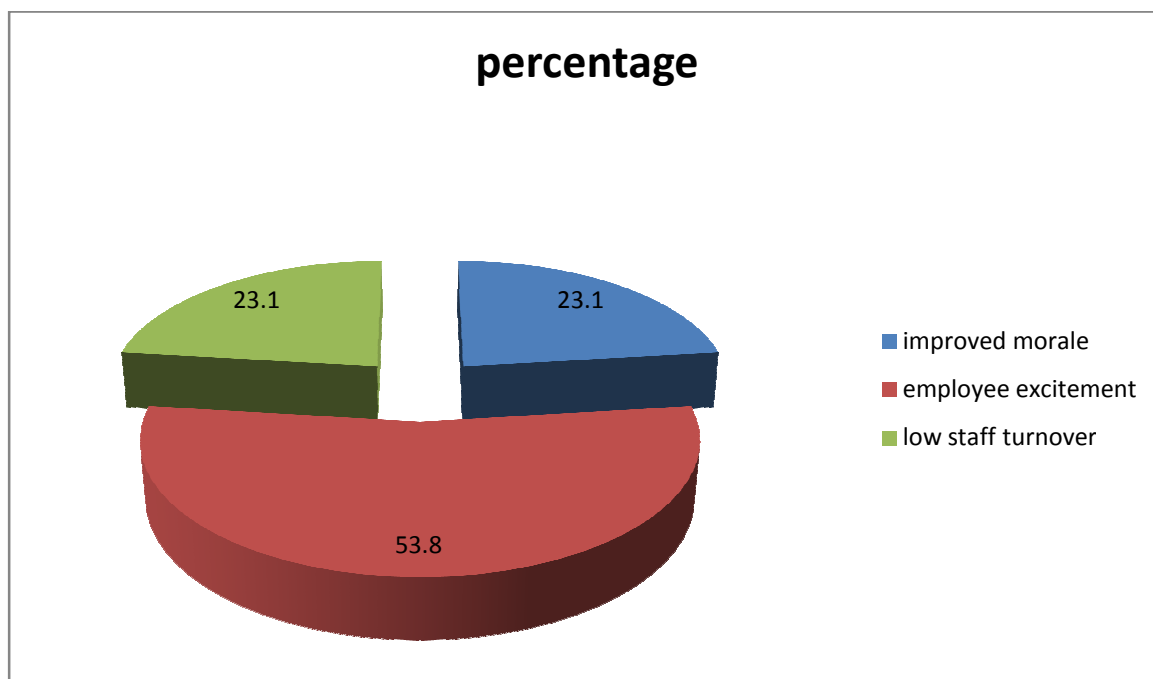
	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	39	75.0
agree	4	7.7
uncertain	4	7.7
disagree	3	5.8
strongly disagree	2	3.8
Total	52	100.0

Out of the fifty two respondents, 39 were in strong agreement with the statement that rewarding is one way of motivating employees which helps improve service delivery. Four agreed, while another four were uncertain. Those who disagreed were three and those who strongly disagreed were two. There are different ways off motivating employees which include use off monetary incentives and recognition. Rewarding employees for a job well done contributes greatly to raising the employees morale hence service delivery.

6.5 : Effects of short term rewards.

The respondents were further asked to establish the various effects of short term rewards and various responses were obtained as shown in table 4.7

Figure 6.4 Effects of short term rewards



53.8% of the respondents felt that the short term effect of rewarding is employee excitement while those who felt it was improved morale tied with those who felt it would lead to low staff turnover at 23.1%. Employee excitement is probably the most short lived effect of rewarding, while improved morale will be a little long lived while low staff turnover can be regarded as long-lived. Exciting employees overcomes dullness at the place of work and makes them appreciate and identify with organization.

7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary of Findings

The response rate was 88. % with a majority being middle aged between ages 31-50, and a bigger percentage (63.5%) were male while the remaining 36.5% were females. The study also unveiled that half of the respondents had post graduate education and that majority (55.8%) worked in the academic department. The majority (42.3%) indicated having experienced three cases of poor service delivery in the last six months. this was followed by those who had experienced two cases of poor service delivery at 25% while those who had encountered one case came next at 5.8%. Most (78.8%) of the respondents felt that the institution was not using non monetary rewards to reduce cases of poor service delivery. Out of the respondents who felt that non monetary incentives were used, the highest percent (36.4%) felt acknowledgement was mainly used. Eighty eight point five percent felt that there was no system of cross rewarding while 11.5% felt there was a system of cross rewarding.

8. Conclusion

There are various strategies that an organization can employ to ensure that service delivery is done effectively. One of them is use of non monetary incentives which include recognition, people are motivated to deliver by different things. Some will be motivated by monetary incentives while others will be motivated by other intrinsic drives such as recognition and ability to achieve.

Tangible rewards such as gift vouchers or a trip to a tourism destination give a long lasting impression to the employees. An organisation can package the reward as an award to be competed for by the employees whereby the winner gets the tangible reward. Employees can be recognized by receiving a certain trophy or certificate of performance or just have their names displayed publicly as the performers. They can also be congratulated in presence of other employees for the good work done.

9. Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends the management to put in place the appropriate measures that will ensure that all the employees have equal chances of being rewarded for a job well done. The study further recommends the institution to make use of the applicable tangible rewards such as awarding voucher, gifts, cash bonus to improve service delivery. Despite the fact that the organisation employs staff who are trained in their field of operation, the institution can sponsor performing employees to further their studies or change their line of career if interested in doing so.

10: Recommendation for further studies

The researcher recommends another similar study to be carried out in another public institution offering different kind of services for comparison since the institution studied could be only biased to the learning institution.

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