UTILITY OF GEMBA KAIZEN MODEL ON PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN NAKURU SUB COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT;

The reliance on management model has become a common practice in management institutions whether public, private or civil. Through sampling of 8 out of 24 Government departments this study examined the utility of Gemba Kaizen Model in government offices in Nakuru Sub County in Kenya. This study sought to unravel the unique attributes that makes the model an ideal management approach especially in high volume and low budget public institutions in the third world countries like Kenya. The appreciation of Public sector reforms and performance-based management has positioned the Kenyan public service as an ideal agency of study. An analysis of public servants awareness, waste management policies, innovation and customer satisfaction variables were analyzed from the 80 respondents sampled among service seekers and public officers in Nakuru using primary data collection and analysis tools. Karl Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients were used in testing the nature and strengths of the variables under study. A positive correlation was found between innovation waste management policies, continuous improvement and levels of service delivery in the sub county. The study offers policy and management proposals on performance based reward system, automation and continuous review of workplace systems and toolkits for improved service delivery. It recommends further research on private and civil society institutions as well as re-invention of public service delivery systems in Kenya in tandem of Vision 2030 country targets.

Key words; Gemba kaizen, innovation and service delivery.

1.1 Background

Since independence, the Kenyan civil service has undergone phenomenal transformations that have attempted to keep pace with the equally momentous economic and political growth of the country. At independence, with the unveiling of Sessional Paper No 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its application to planning in Kenya, the Kenyan government aspired to domesticate local practices and personnel to drive the mainstream public service. This was achieved by the first drive was to indigenize the civil service, second to take over settler agriculture and thirdly to replace Asian commercial bourgeoisie. The Africanization of the upper levels of the civil service took place rapidly save for a few technical positions that took a few more years, (Karugu, 2013).

The Kenyan civil service is managed by the Public Service Commission of Kenya, which exists courtesy of Chapter 13, Article 233 to among other things; to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organization, administration and personnel practices of the public service ensure public service is efficient and effective, Article 234 (d and e), (Constitution of Kenya 2010). The current structure of public service as derived from Chapter thirteen of the Constitution also importantly sets the values and principles of public service as; High standards of professional ethics, efficient, effective and economic use of resources; responsive, prompt, effective, impartial and equitable provision of services, (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the problem.

Public sector provision of services has continued to be a major source of focus in management circles since the operations of private sector is also largely dependent on government efficiency in view of licensing, regulations, provision
1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to; to assess the Gemba Kaizen management model in public sector service delivery in Nakuru Sub County. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the extent to which workplace innovations enhance service delivery in Nakuru Sub County.
2. To assess waste reduction measures impact on service delivery in Nakuru departments.
3. To assess the effect of continuous improvement measures on service delivery in Nakuru.

1.4 Justification of the study

This study has been necessitated by the inherent obligation of African nations to up their game in matching the public and private practices of the developed countries’ systems. Meager and thin allocation of funds to Government departments for office automation and process amenities as well as non regular training on modern management practices calls for the design and application of cost cutting strategies, adoption of leaner process and elimination of duplicative functions in service delivery process. Gemba Kaizen management model seeks to reduce process costs and elimination of wastages therefore can offer relevant solutions to government departments especially in the Third World.

The Gemba Kaizen model has been successfully employed globally on various sectors and corporations with Toyota Corporations standing out as the best case study. Toyota Corporation is a high volume, multi functional industrial and global concern with production and manufacturing lines in various parts of the globe. The industrial effort in Toyota Corporation and as espoused in the Kaizen is centered on the worker output and effort, while on the same bandwidth the practice and management of public service is hinged and centered on the human capital. Both systems focus on the human variable to production thus offering a fertile combination of orientation worthy deepening and inquiry. The challenges of education, training and development of personnel especially of managers in public service enterprise confront most developing countries. Problems of management development are particularly acute in those countries that suffer from inadequate institutional structures, insufficiency of management staff, lack of personnel policy and poorly developed educational technology. No one doubts any longer that the human potential skills and knowledge of public enterprise management are of great importance for better and more efficient performance of public enterprise, (Irshae, 1982). The study sought to help policy makers in the public service in considering design and rollout of management process policies that are sensitive on cost implications, optimally utilizes current public service workforce and re-engineer conduct and approach in public service in Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was conducted during the period of transition from centralized government system to the
devolved system of government under the new constitutional dispensation. It focused on three Gemba kaizen variables of innovation; waste elimination; continuous improvement on service delivery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Introduction

The relations and dichotomy with service delivery benchmarks will be correlated with regard to the practice of public management and relevance to the Kenyan civil service. Corresponding service delivery levels were comparatively discussed with reference to variables of waste management, innovations and continuous improvement.

2.2 Kenya public sector reforms

In 2007, Kenya was awarded the United Nation’s Public Service for Public Sector Reforms, the most prestigious International recognition for excellence in Public Service. The Performance Contracting System won in the first category of Accountability, Transparency, and Responsiveness in Public Service. Performance Contracts in Kenya now join select initiatives whose impressive accomplishments warrant this special recognition (PSC, 2013).

Management of institutions and driving of programs forms a critical premise in corporate and public management. Managers are the most expensive resources in most businesses,—and the one that depreciates the fastest and needs the most constant replenishment. It takes years to build a management team; but it can be depleted in a short period, (Drucker, 1977).

2.3 Performance contracting and continuous improvement

Governments seek various way of improving the performance of public enterprises and agencies. A performance contract binds the owner of an enterprise on one side and the management on the other side, setting out certain targets and results to be achieved in a given timeframe. It also enumerates the mutual obligations of the two parties in achieving the targets set in the contract, (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995).

Organization goals should be set high enough so that a person has to stretch to reach them but low enough so that they are attainable. Subordinates will not be motivated to reach high levels of productivity unless they consider the boss high expectations realistic and achievable. If they are encouraged to strive for unattainable goals, they eventually give up trying and settle for results that are lower than they are capable of achieving…. in other words, the practice of ‘dangling the carrot just beyond the donkeys reach’ endorsed by many managers is not a good motivational device’ (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

2.4 Quality service delivery

Franklin and Ripley, (1982) noted that belief systems and bureaucratic policies greatly affect the output of public officers on service delivery, they pointed out that bureaucrat tend to adopt the ideological coloration of the agency that employ them and the they are quite circumspect about stating their beliefs while they are in the office. Maintenance of quality services to the public is a key intent of performance contracting. Service Delivery Standards are quantifiable performance reference points. The drive for efficiency and setting of standards in the public service has two fundamental purposes; to avoid wastefulness in public expenditure, and to increase the productivity of the public service workforce. The primary goal remains to improve quality of services, commonly measured by the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the customer (DPM 2002).

2.5 Gemba Kaizen management concept

Kaizen is a Japanese management strategy that generally means “change for the better” or “continuous slow improvement, a belief that all aspects of life should be constantly improved (from the Japanese words “kai” means continuous or change and “zen” means improvement, better). Kaizen is gradual, uses small steps, conventional knowledge and a lot of common sense, while innovation is viewed as being more radical because it comes in big steps. Following these principles, work processes are redesigned to eliminate waste (muda) through the process of continuous improvement —kaizen. The seven types of muda are overproduction; waiting, time on hand; unnecessary transport or conveyance; over processing or incorrect processing; excess inventory; motion and defects, (Kaizen, 2005).
Kaizen approach premised on principles of profitable industrial engineering and modern day institutional management in a competitive business environment creating an atmosphere of continuous improvement by changing views, methods and ways of thinking. Kaizen approach hold that improvement in one's own work, savings in energy and materials, improvement in the working environment, machines and processes; improvements in product quality and ideas for new products should guide corporate practices. On the other hand, Kaizen is based on making changes anywhere improvements can be made and recognizing the centrality of workers views on the processes and procedures. In western philosophy, it may be summarized as, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

2.6 Workplace waste elimination

Kaizen approach focuses on elimination of waste, measurement of standardized operations, gauging measurements against requirements and continuous improvement. One of the key concepts of Kaizen is that “If there is no action there can be no success.” The goal is not a 100% solution that solves all the problems at one time. But rather a 70% solution that can be accomplished in a one-week time frame with the intent to hold another event in several weeks that further improves the processes.

In Kaizen (2005), management’s role in continuously encouraging and implementing small improvements involving everyone. Essentially, 'just in time' manufacturing consists of allowing the entire production process to be regulated by the natural laws of supply and demand. Customer demand stimulates production of a vehicle for instance. In turn the production of the vehicle stimulates production and delivery of the necessary parts and so on. Under 'just in time' the ultimate arbiter is always the customer. This is because activity in the system only occurs in response to customer orders. Production is ‘pulled’ by the customer rather than being 'pushed' by the needs or capabilities of the production system itself, (Toyota, 2001).

2.7 Automation and continuous improvement

In civil service the time taken to offer certain services is gided by the Departments Service Charter. Service Chartes is a public statement or contract that defines and declares what an organisation is, its mandate, services offered details of user charges, time taken, standards expected and redress mechanism in case of dissatisfaction. Value for time must accrue to both the public servant and the client as well. these ensures efficiency and time optimality where members of the public should not waste valuable time and patience accessing government services, (DPM, 2002). In Japanese 'jidoka' simply means automation and in Toyota it means 'automation with a human touch'. Staff through their teams should identify opportunities for making amends and take initiatives for implementing those improvements in liaison with management (Liker 2004). The Civil Service manual appreciates that government offices are yet to fully exploit the potential offered by information technology. Moreover, virtually all records are maintained on manual filing systems while many offices lack much needed computer access. Poor record keeping and cumbersome manual filling systems are some of the biggest constrains on improving service delivery, (DPM 2002). Emergence and growth of usage of technology has given rise to concepts of e-governance and e-government. The 'e' part of both concepts stands for the electronic platform or infrastructure that enables and supports the networking of public policy and processes development and deployment. It is widely acknowledged that the original impetus for acquiring and using electronic apparatus in government and governance arose from earlier successes with the same kind of strategy in the commerce, (Ramnarine & Endeley, 2008).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A descriptive survey design was used for this study in order to describe Gemba kaizen management model variables in public sector service delivery in Nakuru district. This design was appropriate as it involves collection of information from a cross section of respondents selected in the study area as it offers a researcher the advantage of focusing on specific description or characteristics.

3.2 Sampling technique and size

Conservative customers/clients estimates per day in the district Headquarters is 450 persons (District profile 2012), therefore the average for a week is (450 x 5 = 2,200 clients. Using Andrew Fisher Method, An equal ratio 50-50% was used for staff and clients
respectively, therefore; \(40+40 = 80\) respondents. The random stratified sample of a third consists of eight departments from a total population of 24 departments in Nakuru Sub county, \(1/3 \times 24\) Dept = 8 Departments. Sampling was done randomly and public officers and their supervisors were picked from the departmental heads in the Sub county headquarters. Five customers/clients were also picked randomly from service seekers in the eight Departments. A total of 5 staff members from each department were sampled with at least one being at managerial and supervisory level.

3.3 Data collection and processing techniques

Questionnaires were used to collect data, such as supplied and administered to the public officers Departmental heads (supervisors) and service seeking clients after they had been served by selected random sampling technique. Data collected was analyzed through Microsoft Word and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version20). Descriptive statistics helped in explaining the findings by use of percentages. Karl Pearson’s coefficients of correlation was run and interpreted in analyzing the relationships between selected variables. It’s the most widely used method in measuring degree of relationship between two or more variables, (Kothari 1985).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Bio data of the respondents

This section summarized the attributes of the respondents views of their age and gender. The age distribution was 35% over 40 years and 62% between 21 years and statutory employability age of 18 years in Kenya. The gender distribution was 55% female and 45% male, representing balanced gender parity among public servants.

4.2 Workplace innovation

The study found out that among research respondents, 52% confirmed appreciation and support to new ideas and innovations while 22% of the respondents felt there isn’t appropriate appreciation. Table 4.1 shows the study findings of a .255 positive correlation between workplace innovations with service delivery, this concurs with Liker (2004) assertion that staff should identify opportunities for improvement in close liaison with management. According to Kothari (1985), when the value of “r” lies between 0 and +1 there is a positive correlation wherelse a negative “r” value indicates negative relationship.

The study found that a slight majority of departments have waste management policies with a significant 41% of the department not having policies to address waste management at workplace. This indicates the urgent need for corrective measures in managing workplace wastage of resources, therefore a great need to increase workplace safety measures. Table 4.2 shows the correlation between waste management and service delivery, where it was found that +.154 correlation coefficient between workplace waste management policies and respondents description of service delivery. This connotes a positive relationship between the variables. Shickey (2001) obligates citizens not only to participate in governance but to demand proper utilization of their funds.

4.3 Continuous improvement

The study found a 61% approval for continuous improvement policies response as opposed to 18% response against continuous improvement, it was found out that among the staff, 74% of the respondent were keen on making service offered to clients better with time, this is a positive indicator on public officer attitude toward service delivery. The study found a positive correlation of .059 between desires by staff to continue improving services with levels of service delivered. As noted by Heller (1991), the more change driven a business is, the more essential it becomes for staff to seek better service provision to ensure effective service. The respondents were 55% female and 45% male, representing balanced gender parity among public servants.

4.4 Service delivery

The study found out that over 80% of respondent felt training increased service delivery with 12% noting reduction of service delivery after training sessions. To improve performance, the government has continued to undertake a number of reform measures. However, these measures have not provided a framework for guiding behavior towards attainment of results or ensured accountability in the use of public resources and efficiency in service delivery, (GOK, 2005). The study found out that over two thirds of the respondents agree that information shared is put
in good use by supervisors in improving service delivery. However, according to Weber, a bureaucratic organization is technically the most efficient form of organization system possible that upholds precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and costs occasioned by dysfunctional communication channels at work place, (Sagimo 2002).

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The findings brought out the low level of common knowledge among officer and customer on Gemba kaizen principles and application, though still officer may have applied the same waste management practices, continuous improvement and practiced teamwork with conscious realization that they are cardinal Gemba kaizen practices. New ideas and innovation from staff and customers are appreciated, they aids management on tapping on employee knowledge and talents in improving service delivery and reducing cost thus increased value to the taxpayer and the general public. The research noted that the staff and client are unanimous that cost cutting and waste reductions measures are key in enhancing service delivery.

The study brought out the desire of clients and public officers in periodically making better quality of services offered. Continuous training was identified as a key contributor to enhanced service delivery, since it helps in equipping public servants with appropriate job skills and customer care competences. The quality of service given underpins the institutional goals and endeavors, therefore is incumbent upon public servants to offer the best and quality services to their clients. Appreciation of Gemba kaizen model can greatly aid prudent service delivery in Nakuru, by managing costs, guarantee service improvements and enhancing service delivery.

5.2 Conclusions

The research brought out salient information and buttressed earlier management authors positions that Gemba kaizen is an ideal management model that seeks leverage on team work innovations, continuous workplace process improvement to enhance service delivery and higher staff productivity. Therefore Gemba kaizen variables of new ideas and innovation, waste management and continuous improvement have largely positive relationship with levels of service delivery. It affirms the model that have succeed in Asians countries like Japan can be domesticated or even improved to address challenges and problems in Kenyan setting.

5.3 Recommendations

The research made the following recommendations to policy makers, system developers, supervisors, public servants, public service users and the general public;

County Governments and National Government ministry responsible for public service to consider rolling out a customized national “Gemba Kaizen Implementation plan” to leverage on the salient feature of the model that enhances waste management and workplace innovations in line with Vision 2030 in Kenya. The public service to invest more on staff training and inductions, since it was identified as a key source of staff work transformation and value enrichment strategy. The public sector should invest more on automation and computerization of basic services as envisaged in Vision 2030. This reduces personnel costs, enhances accountability and resonate well with the increasingly techno savvy client base.

REFERENCES