

Performance of Officials and Agents of the State of Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform According to Professional Seniority and Interpersonal Relations

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to show the influence of professional seniority and interpersonal relations on the performance of officials and agents of the state of Ministry of the Public Service and Administrative Reform. It is based on a general assumption that there is a direct link between the two levels of study variables. The verification of this hypothesis required a quantitative approach. The sampling technique used is stratified probabilistic method. The survey was conducted among a sample of 103 permanent officials and agents of the state by means of a questionnaire. The counting of the data obtained and their statistical treatment using the chi-square test can isolate two results. On the one hand, the age does not determine the performance of state officials and agents of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform. On the other hand, relationships have a significant influence on the performance of state officials and agents of that Ministry.

Keywords: *Professional seniority, Interpersonal relations, Performance, Official, State Agents*

According to Roussel (2009), the Human Resources Management (HRM) is the set of activities aimed at developing collective efficiency of the people working for an organization. Its mission is to lead the development of human resources for the achievement of organizational objectives. To do this, it defines strategies and human resources by means of the organizational functioning modes and logistics support to develop the skills necessary to achieve the objectives of the organization.

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It is in this perspective that one can appreciate the importance of the current human relations. This current, favorable to the promotion of rights at work, places particular emphasis on the consideration and attention to be given to workers. It is this enhancement of the working man that motivated the Ivorian authorities to consider it as a key resource in the development of a nation, where Human Resources Department of the institution in all departments and in all state structures. The main goal is to build a modern and efficient public administration through rational management of available human resources.

However, despite this significant step the government has done, one thing worth doing. Is that the human resource management is slow to take off and the place where it belongs in the Ivorian public administrations. Indeed, a number of officials and agents of the state seem to really ignore its importance. This ignorance inevitably and sadly led to a decline in performance among employees of these public administrations. Now, at a time when we hear more and more the emergence of our country in 2020, would it not benefit the government firmly on the different administrations of state towards absolute search for performance? This reflection should be conducted, because today the Ivorian administration is facing the challenges of globalization, technological change and competition both national and internationally. As such, it is bound to face a challenge that can ensure its credibility, namely the search for organizational performance. In all organizations, the performance of the employee is given a sine qua non that can lead to competitiveness. But in general, it is alleged that the Ivorian administration to be less powerful (heavy and redundancy) in the exercise of its functions. Therefore, we found it useful to conduct this study at the Department of Public Service and Administrative Reform, which, moreover, is the institution in charge of human resources in Côte d'Ivoire.

The performance is a polysemous concept that can be defined from various angles, including economic, financial and managerial. It is this latter angle that interests us in this research. In this light, Burlaud (1995) apprehended as a result that represents the level of achievement of objectives where Bourguignon (1996) adds that it refers both to the result that the actions that allowed to reach. Igalens (2011), meanwhile, are rather seen done to an enterprise to be efficient and effective. In short, there are as many definitions as there are authors. Therefore, in this study, we simply consider performance as a set of positive behaviors expected by the enterprise.

Performance, it must be noted, is determined by several factors. These can be grouped into four broad categories. This is remuneration, professional training, motivation and social relations. So, Allouche *et al.* (2003) show that enterprises who implement a system for sharing profits (participation of results, employee shareholding) have superior results in terms of commercial performance (level of activity) and the productive performance (efficient use of factors of production).

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Becker *et al.* (1987), for their part, point out that investment in human capital, either through initial training, work experience or job training, is a source of positive returns. Several other authors such as Bartel (1995), D'Arcimoles (1995), Black *et al.* (1996), Barrett *et al.* (2001), Bassi *et al.* (2002) and Peretti *et al.* (2013) have validated in their respective studies, the existence of a link between continuing education and performance.

Regarding them, Archier (1991) and Cobut *et al.* (2009) argue that motivation is a performance factor in the company because it allows employees to achieve the objectives assigned to them. These authors show that motivation is a real social success lever.

Mayo (1932), meanwhile, reveals the significant impact of psychological climate underpinned by human relationships "healthy" on the behavior and worker performance. In the same vein, Maslow (1943) highlights the importance of human relations at work through the sense of belonging developed his theory of hierarchy of needs. Lewin (1947) demonstrated the significant impact of human relations on the group productivity. In other words, a group characterized by a democratic relational style is more effective than a group which predominates interpersonal relationships "autocratic" and "carelessness".

The subject of performance in the public administration Ivorian's its registered interest in the impact that it generates both on the organization, employees on any society. Thus, the results of this study may allow, at first, these administrations to be more competitive on the market, to grow their revenues and enroll in a perspective of long-term growth. They could, in a second time, help leaders of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform (MFPPRA) to create the conditions of work and to develop motivation strategies for all officials and agents of the state are more efficient.

This topic is also of scientific interest because the performance issue is topical. The many writings internationally constitute a proof. Among the scientific studies relating to the subject, one can identify those Connerton *et al.* (1979), Clark (1980), Mefford (1986), Allen (1988), Boal (1990), Freeman *et al.* (1990), Ng *et al.* (2002), Foray and Mairesse (1999), Laroche (2002) and Barraud *et al.* (2003).

In Côte d'Ivoire also work emphasizing some determinants of performance has interested many authors whose Koné (2010), Coulibaly (2011), Tombezoogo (2011), Aho (2012) and N'zoré (2013). In general, these studies put more emphasis on factors relating to the remuneration, motivation and continuing education as conditioning organizational performance. In our humble knowledge, very few studies have brought to date on psychosocial determinants of performance, including interpersonal relations and seniority.

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However, relationships are important in a working group. Indeed, the group can only be effective if its members develop relationships required to achieve the objectives defined him. So filigree profile link relationships and work performance. Similarly, considering seniority as the number of years spent by an employee in a given enterprise, then it can be assumed that it would also influence the performance due to professional experience gained.

The theories of social influence developed by authors like Montmoullin (1958) and Moscovici (1984) supports this analysis. These theories attach to relations between individuals, between groups and between an individual and his social group. Their aim is to highlight and provide an explanation of the psycho-sociological phenomena involved in these relationships. Among their contributions, we may retain those relating to the relationship between a subject and his environment.

According to these theories, an individual may be under the influence of another or his membership group. This then gets to develop pipelines required by its commitment to such a relationship. This is the case of the dominant lines that express the pressure of the individual or group on a topic.

The theories of social influence are undeniable usefulness to this study in that they reveal how social or interpersonal relationships can cause, in a given individual, a change in attitudes, behaviors, opinions, beliefs and feelings.

In conducting this study, we propose, as a general objective, to establish the link between seniority, interpersonal relationships and performance. This objective basis of our general research hypothesis that professional seniority and interpersonal relations significantly influence the performance of officials and agents of the state of Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform. This general hypothesis comes in two operational assumptions below provide:

- 1) The performance is lower among employees who have less than ten years of service in the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform than it is among their colleagues in total more than ten.
- 2) Workers who have good cooperation in their service in the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform have higher than their counterparts in whom this collaboration is poor performance.

The testing of the facts of these assumptions requires a methodological approach to be exposed.

METHODOLOGY

The assumptions set out above suggest two independent variables and one dependent variable. This concerns the performance at work and they agree in the nature of interpersonal and seniority.

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Work performance is understood in terms of skill level and contribution to enterprise objectives. It refers to the contribution of each employee in the collective result at a relevant service or a specific cell. The general status of the public service, the evaluation of performance of agents is done on a scale from 01 to 05. A worker with a score less than or equal to two (2) is considered less efficient while another having a score equal to or greater than three (3) is described as more efficient.

Interpersonal relations designate the nature of the relationship between the employee's peers, that is to say his colleagues of service. This variable, qualitative, admits two characters (good cooperation, poor collaboration). Collaboration is called good when the existing working relationships between the employee and his colleagues are looking good. In contrast, it is described as bad when they are conflicting.

Professional seniority is defined here as the number of years of practice in the enterprise, that is to say the time spent in the enterprise for hiring. In the present study, this variable was dichotomized in older and less old. The official or state agent is older when he has more than ten years in service. By cons, it is less old when he, to his credit, more than nine years of service.

The study population consists of all officials and agents of the state Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform in service at the headquarters of the ministry, located at the corner of Angoulvant boulevard and the Dr. Crozet avenue in Abidjan Plateau. The numbers of 103, these officials were selected through stratified probabilistic method. First, the directions of MFPPRA represent the first level strata of the study. Then, based on the list of staff every direction, we proceeded to a second level, a random choice from a first participant chosen at random. Giving every worker the non-zero probability of belonging to the sample. This method has the advantage of reducing the sampling error.

The survey was conducted on site and is carried out through a questionnaire with four axes:

- Personal characteristics of the respondents;
- Items to enjoy nature of interpersonal relationships;
- Items that provide information on seniority;
- A transcript of each employee indicating its performance obtained.

Statistical analysis of the data collected reveals two levels of outcomes related to working hypotheses originally issued.

RESULTS

The application of the statistical test chi-square resulted in two significant facts. These concern, firstly, seniority at work and on the other hand, interpersonal relationships.

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1) Seniority professional and performance of the officials' MFPPRA

The chi-squared test was performed to test the influence of seniority on the performance of officials from the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform. It is applied to the table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of frequencies for public employees based on seniority professional a work performance

Professional Seniority			
Performance	Oldest	Less old	Total
Higher performance	18	66	84
Lower performance	4	15	19
Total	22	81	103

The calculation of chi-squared value gives of 0.0013. It is not significant at the 0.01 probability threshold. The first hypothesis is not confirmed, that is to say, seniority at work does not exercise influence over the performance of officials and agents of the state Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform. In other words, the professional seniority does not significantly discriminate against employees of the Public Service of this Ministry in relation to their performance.

The fact that our hypothesis is not confirmed could result from two elements. One could raise a methodological error related to the fact that the control of confounding variables could not be done with full force. The other could be due to the quality of survey instruments at our disposal that do not necessarily depend on our doing.

2) Interpersonal relations and performance of the officials' MFPPRA

The chi-squared test was performed to test the influence of interpersonal relations on the performance of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform officials. It is applied to the table 2.

Table 2: Work performance over interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal relations			
Performance	Good collaboration	Poor collaboration	Total
Higher performance	82	2	84
Lower performance	17	2	19
Total	99	4	103

The calculated chi-squared is 2.77. It is significant to the 0.01 probability threshold and information, therefore, the existence of a significant difference between the two groups of subjects involved. Detailed examination of frequencies compared illuminates the meaning of this

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difference. It shows that the majority of subjects who have a good collaboration in the service have a higher performance (82 of 99, or 82.83 %) against a minority of poor collaboration and high performance (2 of 4, or 50 %). Inversely, employees characterized by poor cooperation at work have lower performance (2 of 4, 50 %) against a small proportion of them of good collaboration whose performance is low (17 subjects 99 or 17.17 %).

The second hypothesis is thus confirmed. This means that the performance of employees who have a good collaboration MFPRA is significantly higher than their peers in which this collaboration is poor.

This result can be explained by the concept of cohesion that can be observed between members of the same group. In this regard, social psychology highlights the fact that a group that develops a strong cohesion is more effective than another characterized by a lower cohesion between its members. This is especially true that the more a group is welded, the more he devotes most of his energy and time to instrumental production tasks and more it gains in efficiency.

By cons, plus a group devotes its energy to maintain cohesion within it, resolve internal conflicts, unless he still has the energy to achieve its objectives and it is less effective (Anzieu and Martin, 1971).

This situation is observed among the officials and agents of the state in the study. The fact that they have with each other good interpersonal relationship leads them to regard themselves as being members of one family. So they show towards each other solidarity able to allow them to slaughter in record time different daily tasks. The union is strength, they can only feel less stress at work, be more comfortable in performing their duties and live a moral and social development daily. If there is growth, these workers are likely to be joyful, enthusiastic, dynamic and efficient for the simple reason that the social atmosphere it lends favorably. The community spirit has the advantage of allowing the strongest to support the weakest, the most competent to pull up the less competent and more dynamic offset the shortcomings and errors of worse.

In contrast, among the employees characterized by poor interpersonal relationships, poor cohesion has immediate consequences of generating high risks of misunderstandings, suspicions, conflicts and frustrations of any kind. The frustrations experienced daily can lead them to adopt inappropriate behavior at work that is to say against productive behavior. These can range from aggressiveness to the total demotivation. Then explains the fact that they do not get involved in tasks, do not invest at work and in the work, resulting in a considerable drop in performance.

It is in reality due to the lack of internal cohesion within the group, these employees do not maintain solidarity between them. The fulfillment of the various work activities happening in the words "everyone for himself, God for all". The union is strength, one can easily understand that where there are therefore individualities, this force will necessarily default and workplace morale

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can only go so. So, love for work eventually phased out at home and they can be easily earned by syndrome "pathological presenteeism at work". Thus they spend of their time to manage the frustrations from office to office to talk or walk-up service solely to flee work.

In short, the low performance registered among employees with poor collaboration work flows from the deleterious social climate marked by distrust, individualism and lack of humility to ask others for help in case of difficulties encountered in the performance of their tasks.

DISCUSSION

In conducting this study, our objective is to assess the influence of seniority professional and interpersonal relations on the performance of workers. The results superficially confirm our assumptions.

The effect of job tenure on worker performance is not established. However, the impact of interpersonal relationships on the performance of workers of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform is proven. Indeed, the analysis of the results of the second hypothesis allows us to see that the performance of employees who have good cooperation at work is significantly higher than their counterparts with whom he is observed poor collaboration service. This result is supported by several studies, including those conducted by St-Onge (2012) who reported that interpersonal relationships are indicators of a good social climate at work. This view is supported by Mayo (1932), the study demonstrated the significant impact of psychological climate underpinned by human relationships "healthy" on the behavior and worker performance.

Maslow (1943), in this same vein, supports the thesis that individuals have a natural need to belong to a group. Therefore, he seeks the esteem and friendship of those with whom they are associated for the accomplishment of a task. If this need to belong is fulfilled, they get to work cooperatively and adhere to enterprise objectives. It therefore concludes that a good environment and material benefits are likely to allow an individual to better integrate into the enterprise and to have a more intense activity.

In the same vein, Lewin (1947) also demonstrates the importance of group dynamics on productivity at work. Indeed, for him, human relationships influence the performance of the group, especially when based on democratic relational style characterized by cooperation.

Given the above, it appears that interpersonal relationships are a constant factor to consider in determining job performance. Thus, modern management would benefit from implementing a policy such extolling the virtues of social cohesion and solidarity at work. The Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform of the Ivorian must be the primary beneficiary of such a recommendation, as the socio-economic development cannot be done outside of a quality work environment.

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