

Impact of Performance Agreement on Directors' Work in the Ghana Civil Service

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*The Ghana Civil Service currently employs the use of performance agreement as the basis for assessing the performance of Directors. However, the impact of the performance agreement on Directors' work has not been examined. This study, therefore, assesses the impact of the performance agreement on Directors' work in the Civil Service. Using a data triangulation technique (mixed method approach) for the study, forty (40) Directors were interviewed using a questionnaire for the quantitative study; and, in-depth interviews with selected Directors and Chief Directors for the qualitative study were conducted, until the 20th Director where no new information was been added (data saturation attained). Results indicate that, the performance agreement has led to improved performance of Directors over the successive years. It also impacts positively on the achievement of Directorates' and institutional goals. However, there was only 22% rate of budgetary allocation for directorates to operate. The study further reveals that, Directors showed improved commitment to performance. Thus, 90% of Directors prioritized achieving their Directorate specific output, over individual learning plan and key output to all Directorates. Also, Directors were able to identify their personal strengths which include: team work (90%), Job knowledge (70%), Interpersonal skills (65%), and Adaptability (60%) in order of magnitude. Nevertheless, majority of Directors referred to previous systems of assessment as unstructured. In a very strong affirmation, 95% of Directors noted that, the Performance Agreement is well structured and enabled them to perform better. As a result, an **Impact Framework for Directors' Performance Agreement of the Civil Service** was developed. There were **Institutional level impact, Enabling environment impact, Economic impact and Socio-cultural impact on Directors and their performance**. The study recommends that, government must endeavor to release budgetary allocations to state institutions on time to ensure improved service delivery. Directors must be encouraged to give greater attention to their personal trainings, collaboration among directorates, and management should consider employing qualitative techniques in the Directors performance assessment.*

Introduction

A number of administrative restructurings have been undertaken within the public sector in Ghana over the last thirty years. The reforms were intended to improve the efficacy and success of service delivery to boost productivity. In the area of performance management, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to establish an effective performance management culture that seeks to align objectives, targets and outcomes to organizations and national development goals.

The Annual Confidential Reporting System (ACRS) in 1974, offered employees the opportunity to read and make comments on their performance appraisal reports which hitherto was not the case.

Furthermore, a Performance Evaluation System (PES), was introduced in the Public Service in 1992 under the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) – 1987 – 1993. The PES was an interactive process between a manager and a member of his/her staff and was administered for the category of Deputy Directors and equivalent grades and below.

However, in 1997, a Performance Agreement System (PAS) was introduced to provide an objective means of assessing the performance of senior managers of the Civil Service who in particular had hitherto, long been left out of the appraisal system. Initially, it was targeted at the Chief Directors (CDs) in the Ministries and Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs). The system was operational from 1997 to 2008. This was, however, ad-hoc in its implementation and had no feedback system. For most of the Public Services, a hybrid of performance management models was employed based on the exigencies of the time and the dictates of their various

Governing Boards/Councils. Some of the Boards/Councils adopted a lack-luster approach, particularly, since they were not aware of their oversight roles and responsibilities in ensuring an efficient and operational performance management.

As a result of the non-coherency in the performance evaluation system, the Civil Service Performance Improvement Program (CSPIP, 1995-2001) was introduced (Ayee, 2001). To many, the CSPIP was the first serious attempt by government to revolutionize public service organizations by specifically institutionalizing a performance-driven culture that is similar to systems in advanced economies (Ohemeng, 2011).

A major initiative under this program was the Performance Agreement System (PAS), which was first introduced in 1997, with the main objective of assessing the performance of top civil servants (mainly chief directors and directors) of the civil service (Public Services Commission, n.d.). The initial implementation of the PAS, however, yielded modest results partly due to change in the leadership of civil service and implementation constraints (Public Services Commission, n.d.). In October 2013, however, the Head of Civil Service re-introduced the PAS (Public Services Commission, n.d.).

The current arrangement works at two levels. The first level is the agreement that is signed between chief directors and the Head of Civil Service, witnessed by their respective ministers or deputy ministers. The second level is the agreement that is signed between chief directors and their unit directors (Public Services Commission, n.d.). At both levels, the agreements are based on mutually designed targets that are set at the beginning of the year and evaluated at the end of the

year. To undertake the impact assessment of the Performance Agreement System, Director's assessment over a three-year period (2018, 2019, and 2020) were considered.

In 2019, a total of one hundred and seventy (170) Directors and Heads of Departments (HoDs) were evaluated. This number consists of one hundred and forty-six (146) Directors and twenty-four (24) HoDs.

In 2020, a total of two hundred and sixty-one (261) Directors/HoDs were evaluated with the performance agreement. They were made up of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) Directors/Analogous grade Officers and thirty-three (33) HoDs.

As can be observed, although there has been a number of administrative reforms in the Ghana Civil Service, for performance management, on the contrary, very little or no systematic impact assessment of the reforms have been undertaken.

If the PA is not monitored carefully, it may deviate from the principles of improving operations, achieving organisational goals, and improving the organisational performance. It could also result in the distortion of facts through document forgery to enhance the scores of organizations.

Impact Assessment

The concept of impact is quite vast. It is not just analysing the results to capture the achievements of objectives. It is rather the long-term effect of any action on a project which is either positive and negative; direct effects and secondary effects. These effects are inducted by the activities undertaken on an organization, on a project. These effects are through direct intervention and sometimes they are also

unexpected and unprogrammed effects of the action.

In this study we refer to impact as the action that has led to a result which is nothing but the effect of the cause (the action). This brings us to the point wherein we can say that when we refer to impact, we are referring to the subjects or objects on which the object would have had an effect. In other words, we are referring to the changes that could have been induced by the action on those who were concerned by the project (Beneficiaries in the case of a project, organizations, communities etc.), how they were empowered and the acquisition of capabilities. In such a context, we measure not only direct visible impact, but also the indirect impact and the unforeseen impacts

In the conceptualization of the Directors Performance Agreement, four key principles were adapted. Theoretically the principles of Accountability, Transparency, Equity and Ownership, were considered as the building constructs to guide the development of the policy statements/guidelines. The concept was applied to the Performance Agreement System, as well as the assessment instruments and tools.

Assessment is a necessary and inevitable performance management activity but it is one of the most difficult ones to get right. Attempts to use mechanistic methodologies involving ratings or rankings often prove of doubtful value.

To improve organizational performance top management needs to focus on developing a high-performance culture. The characteristics of such a culture are: a clear line of sight that exists between the strategic aims of the organization and those of its departments and its staff at all

levels; management defines what it requires in the shape of performance improvements, sets goals for success and monitors performance to ensure that the goals are achieved; leadership from the top that engenders a shared belief in the importance of continuous improvement; focus on promoting positive attitudes that result in a committed, motivated and engaged workforce.

Directors in the Civil Service, have an important role in the provision of duty and support for the employees to improve the employee involvement at work (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2008). A trustworthy and fair performance agreement provides security for Directors to perform at work, enable them to increase productivity and produce positive results (Pulakos, et al, 2008).

The impact assessment of the Director's Performance agreement therefore is very important, since it would assist to establish an effective performance management culture that seeks to align objectives, targets and outcomes to the various ministries, departments and agencies and national development goals.

Method

The mixed method research approach was engaged in this study. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) define mixed methods research as the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collections, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.

With a population size of 228 Directors, a purposive sample of forty (40)

Directors who had gone through the performance agreement for the three years (2018-2020) under review were selected to self-administer the research instrument. The quantitative data was collected using the Kobo Collect application and entered through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. This enabled the generation of frequency distribution of cases, and to draw up the relationship that exist between variables.

The qualitative data was collected through the method of documentary research and the in-depth interview of two target groups: Chief Directors and Directors were interviewed until the twentieth participant where data saturation was attained. The data was analyzed using content analysis along with a pattern building technique. Copies of performance agreement, strategic plans and annual reports were requested from the selected Directors. These were analyzed to establish whether they met the prescribed requirements.

Results And Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Directors who responded to the survey were made up of seventy percent (70%) males and thirty percent (30%) females. The response rate by Director's may lead to the conclusion that, there are more male Directors within the service compared to females.

Also, majority of Directors were within the age range of 50-59 which represents 60%; the age range 40-49 represents 26%; whiles ages 60 years and above and 40 years and below were 7.9% and 5.3% respectively. It is important to note that, all the 40 years and below who responded to the survey were not substantive Directors but were Senior officers who acted as Directors in the absence of a substantive Director.

Majority (93%) of Directors have completed Masters education, followed by first degree with 5% and 2% have completed PhD. It is important to note that, it is a pre-requisite for Officers to have attained a master's degree for promotion to the rank of Director in the Ghana Civil Service. This accounts for the high percentage completion of master's education. However, the 5 percent with the first-degree qualification were not substantive directors but senior officers who acted in the absence of a substantive director.

The study reveals that, 87% of respondents were from the Ministries, 10% from the Departments and 3% from Extra Ministerial Organisations.

Furthermore, 63% of the Directors have worked for over 21 years in the Civil Service, 20% have worked for 16 to 20 years within the service, 12% have worked for 11 to 15 years in the service and 5% have worked for 5 to 10 years within the service. Once again it is proper to note that, those who have worked for 5-10 years were not substantive Directors, but were in acting positions.

Impact of Performance Agreement on Directors Work in the Civil Service

This section seeks to examine how performance agreement impacts on the work of Directors in the Civil Service. Organisational goals serve as a guide for Chief Directors Performance agreement, which in turn feeds into the Performance Agreement of Directors. It is assumed that, a positive outlook or performance of Directors would lead to organisations achieving their goals.

It is important to note that, a trustworthy and fair performance agreement provides security for Directors to perform at work, enable them to increase

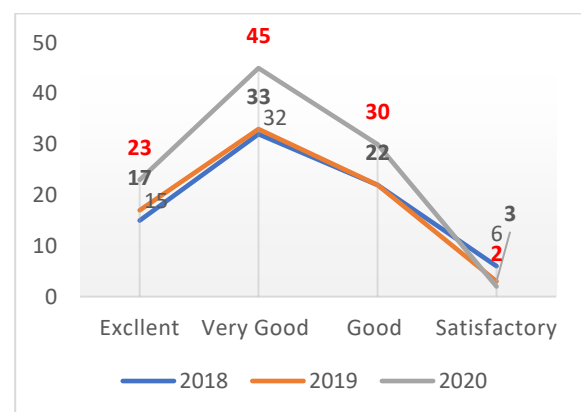
productivity and produce positive results (Pulakos, et al, 2008). The performance of Directors over the past three years (2018 – 2020), were explored to assess Director's performance.

Trend analysis of performance of Directors (2018-2020)

The analysis indicates that, Director's performance in the Civil Service have improved over the successive years. In the 2020-year assessment period 23% of Directors performed excellent, 45% performed very good, and 30% performed good.

If this is compared to 2018, 15% of Directors performed excellent, 32% performed very good, and 22% performed good. Most importantly as can be seen in the chart, Directors who performed satisfactorily continuously declined from 6% in 2018 to more than half (2%) in 2020. Thus, there is an inverse relationship between satisfactory and the other performance indicators (excellent, very good and good).

Figure 3.1 Performance of Directors from 2018-2020



Source: RSIMD 2022

Impact of Performance Agreement on achieving Organisational goals.

The various MDAs are constituted by the President which is enshrined in the Civil Service Act (Section 13), and are supposed to undertake development planning in consultation with the National Development Planning Commission, and to co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance of the sector. Furthermore, under Section 22, the President shall appoint in accordance with article 195 of the Constitution, directors for the Ministries and Government departments.

A director appointed under subsection (1) shall hold office as a civil servant and are expected to work to achieve the aims and goals of the MDA they work with. The performance agreement is therefore a laid down tool to assist directors to achieve the goals of the MDA and by extension the vision of the President of the republic as stated in the Civil Service Act.

On the effectiveness of the performance agreement in achieving **organisational goals**, 98% of Directors agree that the Performance agreement is effective 2% of Directors think the performance agreement is ineffective.

According to Mr. Samuel, *“research will show you that, if people are made aware they are monitored, naturally they tend to perform better, so the performance agreement is working.”*

In addition, Mr. Brown a chief Director noted that, *“the performance agreement is very effective in achieving organisational goals, thus after Directors are evaluated, they are provided with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, a good Director, must examined the feedback as a reference to improve upon their performance. The feedback is therefore not only for the*

Director but to the staff/officers who work with the director.”

The study shows that the individual efforts of Directors, were geared towards achieving the goals of the organisations (MDAs) they work with. Thus, the work of a director is embedded in the overarching policies formulated by the MDAs which take into account the needs and aspirations of the populace.

Goal-oriented behaviour

Goal orientations were originally defined as situated orientations for action in an achievement task (Ames, 1992a; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). Rather than focusing on the content of what people are attempting to achieve (i.e., objectives, specific standards), goal orientations define why and how people are trying to achieve various objectives (Anderman & Maehr, 1994) and refer to overarching purposes of achievement behaviour.

These orientations were conceived of as encompassing the experience of the person in the situation, guiding interpretation of events and producing patterns of cognition, emotion and behaviour (Ames, 1992a; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

The study revealed that, the Performance Agreement has created a sense of awareness of Directors on the functions of their directorate, their annual targets to be achieved, and the overarching goals of the MDA. Directors were expected to bring to bear their technical expertise and the experiences acquired over time, to ensure a continuous progressive improved performance.

It was observed that, 83% of Directors in the Civil Service agree that, the performance agreement has established a

goal-oriented behaviour among directors while 17% of Directors who do not agree.

Tools and Resources needed to work

On the issue of resources needed to work, 55%, and 15% of Directors agree and strongly agree that, their organisations provide them with the needed resources to work. On the other hand, 20% of Directors decided to be neutral and 2% strongly disagree, indicating that, they do not receive the needed resources to do their work.

Those who recorded Neutral, Disagree and Strongly disagree noted that, resources are items you cannot control. They noted that, although budgets are approved annually, when it gets to the implementation stage it “becomes something else. According to madam Afua, “*you may have all the good indicators on paper but resources are never enough.*”

Budget and Implementation of activities

Budgeting is part of the management control process by which managers assure that, resources are obtained and used efficiently and effectively in the accomplishment of the organization’s objectives.

There are several kinds of budgets, and while specific terminology may vary from organization to organization, budgets generally fall into one of three categories – capital budgets, financial budgets, and operational budget. In this survey we shall solely deal with operational budgets. It is defined as the process of formalizing, quantifying, and expressing in a set of detailed operating plans/action plans the near performance expectations and objectives of organisations.

It was observed that, majority of Directors (78%) in the Civil service reported they do not receive enough

operational budget to implement their planned activities. On the contrary, 22% of Directors reported they have enough budget to implement their planned activities.

Miss Ntori, noted that, “*budgetary releases are not timely, although some institutions are able to work around it not all institutions are able to deal with delays in release of funds. She noted that, the Public financial Management Act do not allow officers to even prefinance activities and this makes it difficult.*” However, she was quick to mention that, “*this has made Director’s to become more innovative, in the sense that, Directors tend to perform tasks that do not require funds while waiting for releases and complete the processes when funds are finally released.*” Thus, due to the Directors’ Performance Assessment, Directors’ do not sit aloof, but identify ways to ensure, their planned activities were achieved.

Furthermore, Mr. Joe also noted that, he had won best worker for two consecutive years at his MDA, due to the fact that, he does not always rely on budgetary releases before carrying out his duties. He noted that, “*there was an instance where a Directorate wrote a proposal to the Chief Director waiting for funds; while he and his team had conducted a survey on a sea defence project without demanding for any budgetary release; I was motivated because it feeds into the Chief Director’s performance agreement.*”

Mr. Abraham also noted that, “*it is important for Directors to review their performance agreement in the mid-year review period to commensurate their budgetary allocation. Thus, if budgetary allocations were reviewed downwards, and as a director you had proposed three workshops in your planning phase, if the budget allocation can provide for one*

workshop, you may have to review the three workshops to one to ensure that, you are able to meet your set targets.”

The study brings to bare the inability of most Directors to revise their targets to suit the budgetary allocations for their specific directorates, hence the inability to match their budget with expenses. However, those who were also able to revise their targets also complained of exigencies that truncate their budgets or the erratic release of budget that creates challenges in achieving their targets.

Impact of Budget on Performance

The study shows that, 87% of Directors noted that, budgetary allocations and releases have impact on their performance and on the other hand, 13% noted their performance is not impacted by budgetary allocations.

Mr. Addo mentioned that, *“monies are not released on time and it is erratic, but you may have to achieve results.”* He further noted that, *“this has made the MDA innovative in the sense that, some trainings for staff were done internally to bridge the gap in budget.”*

Cooperation among Chief Directors and Directors

A positive collaboration among Chief Director's and Directors impacts positively on the work of Directors, while a negative collaboration would lead to negative impact. Cumulatively, 95% of Directors noted that, they have a good cooperation with their chief Directors', while 5% responded otherwise. It was noted that, such cooperation ensure Directorate goals were achieved, which will also support the Chief Directors performance and ultimately lead to the achievement of organisational goals.

According to Madam Rhoda, *“the cooperation goes beyond Chief Directors and Directors and stretches to Director-to-Director level of cooperation; thus, there has been several instances that, Director of Policy have come to me to inform me on certain targets that we need to achieve within a particular quarter.”* Furthermore, *“because we would be assessed by OHCS at the end of the year and also with the aim to achieve the President's priority programs like Tree planting and Alternative livelihood; there is proper coordination between Chief Director, Directors and the Minister – who in dire situations takes the initiative to speak to the Minister of Finance to release funds for the needed intervention.”*

Subordinates Feedback

Jones and Bearley (1996) refer to feedback as the practice of gathering and processing multi-rate assessments on individuals and feeding back the results to the recipients. Hoffman (1995, p. 82) explains that feedback is: *“an approach that gathers behavioural observations from many layers within the organisation and includes self-assessment.”*

It is common to see supervisors providing feedback on subordinates' performance, and on very rare occasions would you see subordinates providing feedback to superiors. Directors were queried if the Performance Agreement makes it possible for subordinates to provide feedback on how they perceive certain actions should be taken to achieve set targets. The study confirms Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) which refer to two books published in the late 1980s which they argue got the idea of upward appraisal and multi-source assessment into the mainstream (McCall *et al.*, 1988; Lindsey *et al.*, 1997). These books were based on research carried out by the Centre for

Creative Leadership (CCL) in Greensboro, North Carolina on management development. Three key findings emerged from this study:

- Feedback is an important element of a person's professional and personal development.
- The most effective executives are learners, in other words, effective executives encourage and welcome opportunities for learning and development.
- Most employees operate in "feedback-poor" environments.

This study indicates that, cumulatively 88% of Directors agree the performance agreement enables subordinates' feedback, while 5% do not agree and 7% were neutral.

The high rate of subordinates' feedback obtained as a result of the Performance Agreement indicates the willingness of Directors to welcome learning opportunities and development for their professional and personal development. However, the Ghana Civil Service portrays a contrary view from the third point in the findings of the research carried out in Greensboro, North Carolina and demonstrates a highly good environment for feedback.

Commitment to Performance

The study reveals that, 90% of directors were more interested in their directorates specific output; while 10% of directors were more interested in key-outputs common to all the directorates. The directors opined that; the Performance Agreement provides them with key focus areas for which to undertake their Directorate activities for the year. They further noted that, it enables them to plan and monitor their performance within the

year, to achieve all set targets. They noted that, the end of year assessment is mainly about the Directorate specific output hence it attracts their full attention.

Although, the performance agreement leads to improved commitment to achieving directorate specific output, there seem to be some challenges as well.

It was noted that, the focus on directorate specific output has hampered collaboration among directors. Thus, directors may perceive each other as competitors and would rather focus on achieving their directorate specific output, paying less attention to the key-outputs common to all directorates. If this happens the overall performance of the Institution tend to suffer.

Mr. Enyo who represents the view of the 10% of directors who were interested in key outputs common to all directorates noted that, *"the concentration on directorate specific output sometimes leads to turf war, where directors prevent others from performing similar or related tasks."* He further stated that, *"it is proper for all directorates to work as a team, to enable proper utilization of resources for the overall achievement of the institutional goals."*

In addition, there were directors who showed interest in all the schedules equally and this came up strongly in the in-depth interviews. According to Mr. Akoto, although he selected the directorate specific output, *"all the other schedules are equally important; especially the individual learning plan since it improves directors' capacity to perform well at their job."*

In reference to Peter Scholte's: *"We live our lives in webs of interdependence and yet we keep telling ourselves the story that were independent"* (Coens & Jenkins, 2000, p. 33). They conclude that even

though many managers are doing their best to apply performance appraisals with a humane and considerate approach, there is the need for a radical approach that ensure collaborative effort across directorates to attain the goals for which currently employ performance appraisals.

Personal Strength

Directors were asked of their personal strength that help them to do their job effectively to achieve their organisational goals. The study shows that, 90%, 70% and 65% were recorded for Team work, Job knowledge and Interpersonal skills respectively as the top three personal strengths that enable directors to perform well.

Also, Adaptability recorded 60% representing the fourth personal strength that, assist directors to be productive.

Furthermore, other strengths were outlined by directors as enabling them to perform effectively on the job. Such strengths include, *communication skills, innovation, commitment, assertiveness, proactiveness*, and *job interest*. The other strengths cumulatively recorded 23%.

However, according to the Reflected best self feedback (RBSF) (Roberts, Dutton et al., 2005; Roberts, Spreitzer, et al., 2005) based on a strengths-based approach (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001) that suggests that real excellence is a function of uniqueness.

Thus, people excel when they understand their unique patterns of strengths and learn how to broaden and expand these strengths and talents. Most personal development processes in organizations, are based on a “deficit model” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The strength-based approach to personal development assumes that progress toward excellence is not a function

of improving on weaknesses, but is a function of building on one's strengths (Roberts, Spreitzer, et al., 2005).

The personal strengths, identified by the directors becomes their reflected best self-feedback. It is an indicator of the directors understanding their unique patterns of strengths. Thus, directors in the Civil Service needs to be encouraged to build on their personal strengths to ensure progress towards excellence.

Vision and Goals of Organization

The study shows that, 60% of directors strongly agree that the vision and goals of their organisation were important to them, 35% of directors agree and 5% of directors strongly disagree indicating that, the vision and goals of their organisations were not important to them.

According to Mr. Doe, *the Performance agreement gives focus areas directly linked to organisational targets, which enables the vision of the organisations to be taken into consideration when setting targets and also helps define targets which contribute towards the work of the Chief Director to achieve institutional goals.*

The study explored the effects of directors shared vision and goals of the organisations and performance in the Civil Service. Generally, there is the idea that performance has a certain level of intervention between leadership styles of directors and the holistic vision that is incorporated.

The 95% rate of the value directors have for organisational vision and goals means that, directors were motivated to improve work performance that will drive organizational goals. It will also lead to building competencies in terms of their abilities to continuously develop and deepen their skills, positive attitude and

knowledge to efficiently build and maintain the organizations (Vikineswaran, 2017).

Knowledge of Reforms on Performance Assessment

Directors were asked what appraisal system were used to assess directors within the Civil Service prior to the implementation of the directors' performance agreement.

It was noted that, 47.5% of directors said there was no structured system, 25% have no idea what the previous system was, 15% reported that, there was no system in place and 7.5% and 5% noted that, internal mechanism and performance appraisal system were used respectively.

The responses provided by directors gives an indication that, they were aware of the assessment process that existed before the Directors Performance Agreement.

The unstructured scheme of assessment meant, there was no fair system of assessment. The indication was that, management seldom gives the needed attention to this administrative practice; the process lacks objectivity; it was fraught with superstition, spirituality, and fear; and appraisers were rarely trained. Thus, directors who performed better could not be distinguished from non-performing directors. This meant that, non-performing directors were not sanctioned appropriately.

This system did not contribute much to the culture of performance within the Ghana Civil Service, hence the needed reforms to introduce the Directors Performance Agreement and Assessment.

Director's Performance Agreement vs. Previous System of Assessment

The following responses were provided by directors on which system enables them to perform better. The study shows that, 95% of directors mentioned that, the Performance Agreement enables them to

perform better while a minimal number of 5% of directors said the previous system. Mr. Kwadwo Nkansah noted that, *"the Performance Agreement keep directors on their toes, since it involves a rigorous process that enables monitoring and also feeds into the Chief Director's agreement, while the previous systems were more individualistic."*

Mrs. Mirabel O'Casey noted that, *"the Performance Agreement is well structured to allow easy monitoring of set targets. It also allows Directors to indicate the specific roles they played in the achievement of targets towards the overall organizational goals."*

Furthermore, Mr. Ahankara also noted that, *"the Performance agreement has really brought some sense of urgency into the Civil Service; as the attitude of waiting to complete appraisal form at the end of the year is no more. Also, the PA system encourages and motivates directors, thus, it brings out weaknesses within the organisations and enables redress."*

In addition, Mr. Northey noted that, *"the Performance agreement is more specific with set goals. It also, means you have to follow processes and procedures as you need to show evidence of work done. This allows you to know whether you are achieving your goals or not."*

Also, Mr. Clinton mentioned that, *"there was no performance agreement previously and for that reason the current system provide opportunity for planning, review and evaluation, hence helps to improve performance among directors; Again, where there is a need for review, managerial actions are taken to set attainable goals."*

In addition, Mr. Oppong noted that, *"the Performance agreement allows one to set performance goals and targets for the*

Director. It provides transparent means of evaluating performance of directors in the Civil Service.”

Finally, Mr. Ephah, noted that, *with the previous system directors were not assessed. It was like a story telling system. The PA system enables target setting. It provides some objectivity, feedback for performance, mentoring and coaching. The new PA is better – thus, directors do not only focus on functional areas.*

On the contrary, Mr. Addo, noted that, *“I personally think the performance agreement is not a very fair system considering the small nature of budgets and the difficulty associated with accessing funds to undertake activities.”* This seem to represent the five percent of Directors who think the previous system is preferred over the Directors Performance Agreement.

As can be observed from the quotes above, the Directors defined the Performance Agreement as a well-defined structured system that entails planning, monitoring, tracking of performance, training, evaluating of performance, feedback which is directed at achieving organizational goals and objectives and to which sanctions and rewards were attached.

Directors Assessment

The study shows that, 72% of directors agree that, the performance assessment is a true reflection of their performance. Whiles on the contrary, 28% of Directors noted that, the assessment did not represent a true reflection of their performance.

Directors were divided on the assessment process. Thus, whiles some MDAs use an external assessor and the Chief Director, others use only external consultants as assessors. This has generated a debate among the directors.

Thus, whiles some Directors deem it necessary for their respective chief Directors to be part of the assessment panel others deem it unnecessary.

Those who were in favour of chief Directors being part of the assessment noted that, their presence would enable vivid explanations to other panel members when there is any difficulty, and they can also assist to ensure Directors were accorded the marks they deserve.

Madam Cynthia who is a chief Director, noted that, *“the assessment process is more mechanical. She therefore suggested that, although external assessors were engaged, it is proper to develop a quota system where chief Directors score a certain percentage and the external assessors also score an agreed percentage.”*

Madam Jane also mentioned that, *“there were instances an agency would bring a bill to this Ministry, the Ministry works on it and forwards it to another Ministry to continue the necessary processes, if the forwarded Ministry does not do its work, that should not affect the assessment of the initial Ministry, but mostly the initial Ministry is scored lower marks for that, which I think is not fair.”* She further states that, *“it is proper for the assessors to identify the chain of work, especially in cases where a particular directorates output becomes the input of another Director or MDA.”*

Mr. Kofi, further noted that, *“there is the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system. It is important to synchronize the rating system, thus if a director is rated the best in an MDA, the same standard should be used in rating a Director in another MDA as the best. It is however worth mentioning that, the OHCS has written to MDAs requesting for names*

of assessors, to ensure they are provided with training to synchronize the rating system to enable comparisons.”

The discussions show that, the directors were interested in an evaluation or assessment process that is fair and does not have embedded biases in the assessment process.

Mr. Allotey, a chief Director noted that, *“I have seen the incentive part of the assessment for people who perform well, but I have not seen the punishment part, just as people are rewarded, people should also be punished if they don’t perform well.”* He further noted that, *“due to emotional attachments chief Directors may have with Directors they were sometimes lenient in their scoring of the Directors, he therefore recommended a more objective assessment of Directors.”*

In the section 88 of the Civil Service Act, 1993 (PNDCL 327) enjoins the Office of the Head of the Civil Service to institute an award for meritorious performance in the Civil Service. The OHCS re-instituted the awards for outstanding performance using the annual Civil Service Week celebration platform to recognize the importance of staff of the Civil Service to national development to honour their dedicated and selfless service to the public and citizens of Ghana (MTEF, 2021).

Furthermore, Mr. Bortey who is a chief Director mentioned that, *“the Directors assessment is not cast in gold, it continues to evolve and has to relate to the changing environment, thus previously we did not have Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), since they have been developed, the assessment will have to relate to it.”*

Despite the debate on the composition of assessors on the assessment

process, it was clear that, the design of the process makes it more objective and less subjective. Thus, Directors were assessed with the same standardized instrument with clear guidelines on their own set targets. Marks were awarded according to the level of achievement of the set targets. Nevertheless, the OHCS have instituted trainings for all assessors to ensure a coherent assessment process.

Impact Framework for the Directors Performance Agreement of the Ghana Civil Service

The figure 6.5 below shows the framework that emerged from the assessment of the Directors Performance Agreement of the Ghana Civil Service.

Performance management can be defined as a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results from the organization, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competence requirements. Processes exist for establishing shared understanding about what *is* to be achieved, and for managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that it *will* be achieved in the short and longer term. It is owned and driven by line management.

The impact assessment brings to bare a direct research product which is visible in intermediary impact, and director level impact, towards improved Director’s performance in the Ghana Civil service and consequently, improvements at the Directorate and Institutional levels.

At the Intermediary level, there were three sub-levels of impacts that has emerged as a result of the Performance Agreement and these were: ***Institutional***

impact, Enabling environment impact and *Economic impact*. The impacts at the three levels combines to positively influence the performance of Directors in the Service.

The *institutional level impact* refers to the combination of different factors which coordinate and articulate among themselves to produce an expected or programmed results. As such the definition does not refer to any particular capability, because the whole process is about making the organization “capable” in order to achieve what it should. Thus, the following capabilities had emerged as a result of the Performance Agreement and they were: goal-oriented behaviour, access to tools and resources needed to work, improved monitoring and evaluation and improved work value. These “Capabilities” refer to particular areas of intervention which act as enablers in order to make the organization become capable of achieving results through empowerment in one or many areas.

The *enabling environment impact* refers to the conditions necessary for Directors to operate and the conditions that facilitate performance. Thus, support to the enabling environment represents a more systemic, conducive-level approach to improve performance among directors in an organisation than the deal-level approach of blended finance and other mechanisms that directly engenders individual level improvements. The Directors Performance Agreement has led to an environment where there is cooperation between Chief Directors and Directors, Job Knowledge, Improved Team work and Communication skills.

The *economic impact* also refers to changes in governmental policies and procedures that affect the ability of directors to perform their services with reduced budgetary allocation. In the event

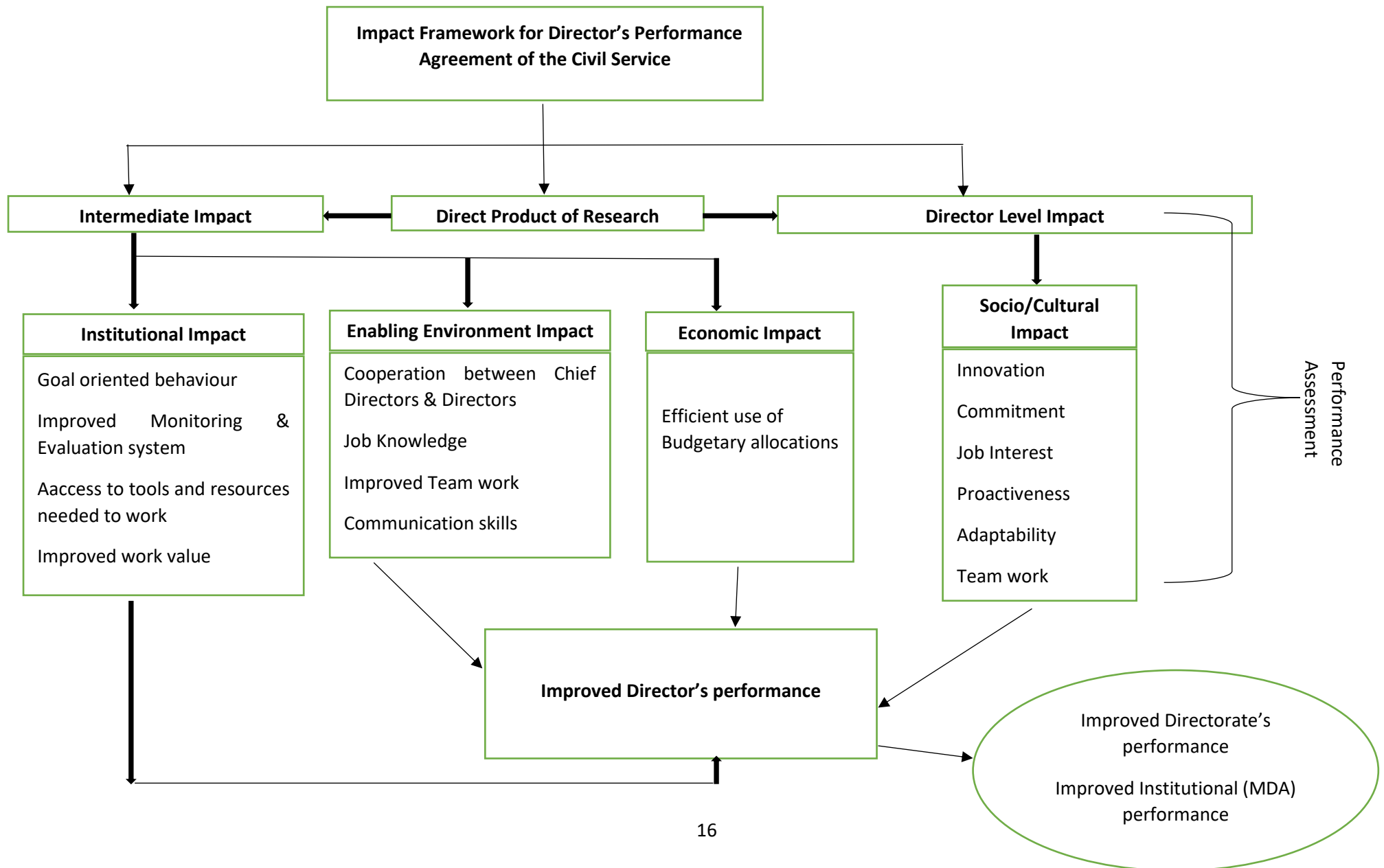
that government enacts stricter codes for controlling finances, this may mean reduced budgetary allocation for operating specific task. That expense may be partially offset by directors realigning their targets and objectives to commensurate the budgetary allocations. In some cases, directors and their staff perform tasks without any budget. Where directors provide services at reduced or no financial allocation, this inures to the benefit of the organisation. By realigning their tasks within the mid-year review also enables directors to strategize to maintain improved performance.

In addition, the Directors Performance Agreement have led to *socio cultural impacts* on directors. The sociocultural environment refers to trends and developments in changes in attitudes, behavior, and values in the MDAs. It is closely related to Directors, lifestyle, culture, tastes, customs, and traditions. These factors are created by the organisation and often are passed down from one generation to another. The Performance Agreement have enabled Directors to be innovative, improved in their commitment to work, exhibit some level of proactiveness in their work and are able to adapt to various circumstances. Directors have become interested in the work of their Directorate and have developed the ability to work as a team or across various teams. The socio-cultural level impacts have emerged as a result of the Performance Agreement and also contributed to improved performance of Directors.

The results of the assessment of the Impact of Performance Agreement on Directors work in the Ghana Civil Service is clearly depicted in the figure 6.5 below. Thus, the improved performance of Directors is dependent on intermediate factors (institutional impact, enabling

environment impact & economic impact)
and socio-cultural factors (Director level
impact) that leads to improved performance
of organisations.

5 Impact Framework for Director's Performance Agreement



SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This section presents a summary of the main findings of how the Director's Performance Agreement impacts the work of Directors within the Ghana Civil Service. Selected key demographic variables, and performance indicators were employed to assess the impact of the Performance Agreement.

A performance impact assessment framework was developed for the study, using the Framework for Comprehensive Impact Assessment. This was based on the premise that, the Impact of the Performance Agreement would have direct product of research, intermediate impact on the institution and the enabling environment; economic impact and socio-cultural impact. It was also assumed that the impact would also be manifested on individual Directors.

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of performance agreement on Director's work in the Ghana Civil Service; to establish the extent to which performance agreement are being effectively used as a management tool to bring about performance improvement. The specific objectives include, to examine how performance agreement leads to achievement of organisational goals; to examine whether performance agreement encourages commitment to performance among Directors in the Ghana Civil Service; and to assess the experience of Directors with the use of performance agreements.

The main source of data used for the analysis in this study were primary data collected from interviewing Directors, acting Directors and Chief Directors in the Civil Service, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. The impact of the Directors Performance Agreement was

analyzed at seven levels, emanating from the direct product of research, intermediate impact, institutional changes, changes in the enabling environment, economic, socio-cultural impact and people level impact.

CONCLUSION

The study has been able to achieve its objectives. The study reveals that, the performance agreement has led to improved performance of Directors over the successive years. The Performance Agreement system was appraised as 98% effective in achieving Directorates goals, 97% effective in achieving Organisational goals (MDAs), 83% rate of goal-oriented behaviour among Directors, 95% rate of cooperation among Chief Directors and Directors, 70% rate of resources needed to perform, and 88% rate of subordinates' feedback. However, there was only 22% rate of budgetary allocation for directorates to operate. With the exception of Budgetary allocation that was low, all other indicators were above 70% which shows that the Performance Agreement Instrument is a robust system for Directors and the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies to perform better.

The study further reveals that, Directors showed improved commitment to performance. Thus, 90% of Directors prioritized achieving their Directorate specific output, over individual learning plan and key output to all Directorates. Also, Directors were able to identify their personal strengths which include: team work as the highest on the list with 90%, followed by Job knowledge with 70%, Interpersonal skills with 65%, and Adaptability with 60%. Also, 95% of Directors agree that, their work is valued in their organization, and 95% also agreed that, the vision and goals of the organization are important to them.

The study also reveals that, Directors were aware of performance assessment reforms that, had taken place within the Service. However, such knowledge was not coherent and most Directors could not give historical perspective of the changing dynamics of the performance assessment reforms in the service. Nevertheless, majority of Directors referred to previous systems of assessment as unstructured. In a very strong affirmation, 95% of Directors mentioned that, the Performance Agreement enables them to perform better.

RECOMMENDATION

Since Directors prioritize Directorate specific output over their training needs, and key outputs common to all Directorates; there should be deliberate policies to ensure Directors undertake their trainings serious. One of the key responsibilities of a manager is to promote staff personal development through training. Training is an essential part of an innovative team, as without it, its employees' skills become outdated and competitors can gain an edge when it comes to innovation. However, there is more to training than just ensuring your staff have the skills necessary to keep up with the evolving market. Training has been found to increase employee morale and motivation.

Investing in training of Directors – if it is carefully selected rather than perfunctory – can be a huge indicator that the MDAs value Directors and their contribution. For that reason, it boosts morale, motivation and staff loyalty. It is important for the various MDAs to look for ways to mentor and coach their team members by providing training that builds on their strengths and reduces the impact of their weaknesses. Directors are the glue that holds the Ministries, Departments and

Agencies together, so failing to train these vital cogs could result in a management team low on morale and less open to innovation than the teams they manage.

Since Budgetary allocations were considered inadequate and untimely releases, it is recommended that, there should be timely release of funds to enable Directorates perform effectively. The government is encouraged to release stated budgetary allocations to state institutions on time to ensure improved service delivery. Over the years if various governments had employed release of actual budgetary allocations to state institutions on time, many of the accumulated challenges facing the country in the provision of infrastructure and social services would have been minimized. The undue delays in releasing the allocations have greatly affected the mandatory functions of many state institutions. Directors should also be trained on effective budgetary control. Thus, budgetary control is a technique encompassing the entire target process, starting from the preparation of the budget through monitoring and reviewing, culminating in corrective action. Its main purpose, therefore, is to enable management plan and carry out operation with efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

Since the assessment process mainly involves quantitative techniques, it is recommended that, management should consider employing qualitative techniques in the Directors performance assessment. A mixed method approach is most preferred in the assessment process. Thus, the quantitative technique will focus on measuring of things that can be counted using predetermined categories that can be treated as interval or ordinal data and subjected to statistical analysis (Patton, 1997: 273). This makes results precise and

easily comparable. However, the qualitative technique would focus on Director's experience and the meanings they place on the events, processes and structures of their normal social setting. Such technique may involve prolonged or intense contact with Directors in their everyday situation. This would provide a holistic view, through the Directors own words and perceptions, of how they understand, account for and act within these situations (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Marshall and Rossman (1995) describe qualitative research as being particularly valuable for assessment that, seeks to explore real organizational goals, linkages and processes in organizations; to understand the failure of policies and practices. Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) noted that, qualitative data are useful when one needs to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same setting. Thus, the qualitative assessment will ensure improved quality of **work**.

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