

CHALLENGES FACING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (PEPMIS) IMPLEMENTATION IN ARUSHA CITY COUNCIL, TANZANIA

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the challenges affecting the implementation of PEPMIS at Arusha City Council. Employing a qualitative research design, purposive sampling was used to select 30 key informants. Primary data was gathered through interviews, complemented by secondary data sourced from relevant documents and literature. Content analysis was applied to analyze the collected data. The results highlighted key technical challenges, including system downtime, slow processing speeds, and a user interface that was not user-friendly. Additionally, insufficient initial training and a lack of continuous support contributed to employee confusion and resistance. The study recommends adopting strategies to address these issues to enhance employee performance. It also suggests that future research explore the integration of PEPMIS with other public sector performance management systems to improve operational efficiency.

Keywords: Employee, Performance, Organizational efficiency, Performance Management Information System.

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Performance management systems (PMS) are essential for boosting organizational effectiveness and enhancing employee productivity globally. In the United States, PMS adoption is widespread, with Sutrisno et al. (2023) indicating that 87% of companies use these systems to align individual employee goals with broader strategic objectives. This widespread usage underscores a global emphasis on improving performance through structured management practices. In Europe, countries like Germany and the United Kingdom emphasize continuous development and feedback, with nearly 75% of firms prioritizing regular performance evaluations to promote employee growth and ensure alignment with organizational goals (Hidayati & Abadiyah, 2020). Meanwhile, in Asia, particularly in China and Japan, there is a strong focus on leveraging technology in performance management, as 68% of companies integrate digital tools to monitor and assess employee performance (Kapoor, 2022). This technological advancement supports a more data-driven approach to managing performance. However, despite these innovations, PMS worldwide encounter significant challenges, including resistance to change and difficulties in aligning performance metrics with strategic goals (Neelima et al., 2024; Khrais et al., 2021). Additionally, adapting these systems to evolving organizational contexts remains problematic (Jayabalan et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2022).

In Africa, the adoption of PMS is rapidly evolving, though its implementation and effectiveness vary considerably across the continent. According to Alwis et al. (2022), Nigeria shows an increasing trend in systematic performance evaluations, with 60% of companies adopting PMS to enhance accountability and productivity. South Africa has seen a rise in the use of performance management frameworks, with 70% of organizations implementing these systems to boost employee engagement and overall organizational performance (Mokomane & Potgieter, 2020). In Kenya, more than 65% of firms utilize performance management approaches to improve operational efficiency and success (Ullah et al., 2021). Conversely, many Ugandan companies still rely on traditional performance assessment methods, with only about 50%

implementing PMS (Mamuye et al., 2022). A critical challenge across Africa is the poor adaptation of PMS to local organizational cultures and practices. The inability of numerous African firms to customize these systems to their cultural contexts significantly undermines their effectiveness (Hutahayan, 2020).

In Tanzania, the use of performance management systems (PMS) in public sector organizations is on the rise, with approximately 55% of these institutions adopting such frameworks to enhance service delivery and boost employee performance (Matimbwa & Masue, 2019). The implementation of the Performance Management System (PMS) at Arusha City Council has faced considerable challenges that undermine its effectiveness. As reported by Tanzania Public Service Management (2023), approximately 45% of employees at Arusha City Council are dissatisfied with the existing PMS, despite ongoing efforts to enhance staff performance and organizational results. Major issues identified include inadequate feedback mechanisms, limited training opportunities, and a disconnect between organizational objectives and the performance management processes (Mkongo & Macha, 2023). This dissatisfaction adversely impacts individual productivity and the overall efficiency of the council, potentially leading to project delays and a decline in the quality of public services.

Weaknesses in the Performance Management System (PMS) have led to persistent inefficiencies, reduced employee morale, weakened accountability, and increased delays and costs in project implementation. These challenges are particularly significant as they threaten the timely development and upkeep of critical infrastructure, which is essential for the economic progress of Arusha and Tanzania as a whole (Matimbwa et al., 2021; Ngulugulu et al., 2023). If these issues remain unaddressed, Arusha City Council risks ongoing poor performance and operational inefficiencies, hindering its capacity to achieve strategic goals. In light of this, the present study aims to identify the challenges affecting the implementation of the PEPMIS within Arusha City Council.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Employee's Performance Management Information System

The Public Employee's Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) serves as a vital mechanism aimed at boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of employees within the public sector (Tanzania Public Service Management, 2023). Its implementation seeks to simplify performance evaluation procedures by aligning employee goals with the overarching strategic objectives of the government. PEPMIS incorporates diverse performance indicators and feedback systems to enable ongoing evaluations and promote accountability in public institutions. Through a systematic approach to monitoring and managing performance, the system is designed to enhance public service delivery and encourage a culture of continuous development.

The Tanzanian government underscores the significance of such systems in fostering transparency and accountability, demonstrating a clear commitment to improved governance and public sector management (Tanzania Government, 2022). Additionally, Mamuye et al. (2022) describe PEPMIS as a comprehensive framework that facilitates performance planning, monitoring, and evaluation for public employees, ensuring their efforts are in line with organizational objectives. For the purpose of this study, PEPMIS refers to the structured processes and technological resources employed to assess and enhance the performance of public sector workers, specifically focusing on Arusha City Council.

2.2 Goal Setting Theory

Goal Setting Theory, pioneered by Edwin A. Locke in the 1960s, was initially introduced in his 1968 publication and subsequently expanded in later research (Locke, 1968; Locke & Latham, 2002). The theory asserts that setting clear, specific, and challenging goals significantly enhances performance compared to vague or easy goals. Locke's work highlights that well-defined and measurable goals boost motivation and improve outcomes by offering clear direction and standards for evaluating progress (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to the theory, goals influence performance through four key processes: directing focus, increasing effort, sustaining persistence, and encouraging the development of effective strategies. Specific goals help channel attention toward relevant tasks, maintain determination when facing obstacles, and stimulate the creation of plans necessary to achieve desired results (Jayabalan et al., 2020).

A major advantage of Goal Setting Theory is its strong empirical validation and broad applicability across multiple domains such as business, education, and athletics (Mokomane & Potgieter, 2020). The theory's practical value lies in its straightforward framework, which organizations and individuals can use to enhance motivation and elevate performance by setting precise and ambitious targets. However, Johnson et al. (2022) note that an important limitation is the potential for excessively difficult goals to induce stress and hinder performance, especially when individuals view these targets as unrealistic. Moreover, the theory tends to overlook intrinsic motivators and the influence of personal values that can shape how individuals respond to goals (Kapoor, 2022).

In this study, Goal Setting Theory provided a valuable lens for examining how the establishment of challenging performance goals within the Public Employee Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) at Arusha City Council affects employee motivation and outcomes. The theory's emphasis on goal clarity and difficulty helped the researcher understand the mechanisms through which performance goals drive employee engagement and productivity.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Mkongo and Macha (2023) explored the effects of e-recruitment, e-training, and e-communication systems on various performance outcomes at the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) Headquarters. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data, the study adopted a case study design and gathered information through surveys and interviews. Results showed that e-recruitment enhanced service quality and increased staffing levels, e-training boosted customer satisfaction and professional standards, while e-communication addressed operational challenges, leading to improved performance and reduced costs. The study also found that well-designed systems were user-friendly and accessible to users regardless of their technical expertise.

Shah et al. (2020) examined the influence of electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM) on HR efficiency within private commercial banks in Tanzania. Employing a quantitative approach, the study utilized structured questionnaires and analyzed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The cross-sectional survey revealed that e-HRM positively affects HR efficiency, suggesting that organizations in developing countries like Tanzania can benefit from adopting e-HRM systems to achieve their goals. The findings also emphasized that for e-HRM to succeed, it must be reliable and adequately supported to ensure the desired outcomes are realized.

Al-Dmour (2020) investigated the mediating role of employee engagement between Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) implementation and employee performance in Jordanian five-star hotels. Grounded in social exchange theory, the study employed a quantitative design with simple random sampling, collecting data from 221 HR staff across 21 hotels via questionnaires, achieving a 71% response rate. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis indicated that HRIS positively impacted both employee performance and work engagement, with work engagement partially mediating this relationship. The research also identified inadequate training and lack of continuous support as significant barriers to effective system implementation, leading to employee disengagement and reduced usage.

Matimbwa et al. (2021) examined how user characteristics, technology factors, and organizational attributes affect the effectiveness of HRIS across six regions in Mainland Tanzania including Mwanza, Arusha, Dodoma, Morogoro, Iringa, and Kagera. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, with quantitative results analyzed via ordered regression and qualitative data through content analysis. The study found that IT skills and employee commitment were critical user factors influencing HRIS efficiency in terms of timeliness, completeness, and accuracy. Organizations that failed to provide ongoing training and support during system transitions experienced greater resistance and lower productivity. The authors stressed that continuous HRIS training, enhanced employee engagement, improved technological capacity, and sufficient IT support are vital for optimizing HRIS performance.

Despite extensive research on performance management systems and their effects on employee outcomes, a significant gap persists in understanding the specific challenges associated with PEPMIS within Tanzania's public sector. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the PEPMIS at Arusha City Council, investigating the challenges hindering its effective implementation.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative research design aimed at gaining a deep understanding of the experiences and perceptions related to the implementation of the PEPMIS at Arusha City Council. As outlined by Dawadi et al. (2021), qualitative research is ideal for exploring complex social phenomena through the subjective viewpoints of participants. The study sought detailed insights into employee experiences, the challenges faced during the implementation of PEPMIS, and the effectiveness of strategies employed, primarily through in-depth interviews that uncovered factors influencing employee performance and system outcomes.

The research was conducted at Arusha City Council. This location enabled access to a diverse sample of Arusha City Council employees engaged with PEPMIS, which was necessary for a thorough evaluation of the system's impact. Recent reports by the Tanzania Public Service Management (2023) indicated significant employee dissatisfaction around 45% with the existing performance management framework, citing problems such as inadequate training, poor feedback, and a disconnect between performance management and organizational goals.

The population for the study included 30 employees at Arusha City Council (Arusha City Council, 2023), encompassing various roles and hierarchical levels to capture a broad range of perspectives on PEPMIS implementation. From this population, a purposive sample of 30 individuals was selected, including managers, directors, human resource officers, and department heads. This sample size was chosen to balance depth and manageability, focusing on participants with direct experience in using and managing PEPMIS to yield rich, relevant data.

Table 1: Sample Size

Category	Number of Respondents
Executive Director	1
Directors	6
HR Officials	8
Heads of Departments	15
Total	30

Data collection combined primary and secondary sources to enrich the analysis. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to share detailed views on system effectiveness and challenges. Secondary data came from organizational documents, performance reports, and academic literature, providing context and supporting triangulation. Content analysis was applied to systematically code and interpret textual data, identifying key themes and patterns related to PEPMIS's implementation and its effect on employee performance.

Ethical considerations were integral throughout the study. Participants gave informed consent after being fully briefed on the study's purpose and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data and securely storing materials. The study avoided conflicts of interest and adhered to ethical research standards by securing approval from institutional review boards, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, and promoting transparency and integrity in reporting the findings.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The presentation of the study's findings and discussions is organized according to the key themes of the research. Remarkably, the study attained a 100% response rate, with all 30 selected interviewees fully engaging in the process. This study aimed to determine the challenges facing PEPMIS implementation. Findings with regard to the challenges facing PEPMIS implementation are presented in the following paragraphs;

The researcher sought to know what problems employees face during PEPMIS implementation. In the interview, six interviewees claimed that:

- "One major problem is the lack of adequate training on how to use the system effectively."*
- "Technical issues, such as system downtimes, are frequent and disrupt the workflow significantly."*
- "Sometimes the system is not user-friendly, making it difficult to navigate and complete tasks efficiently."*
- "There's a lack of real-time support when issues arise, which delays problem resolution and impacts performance."*
- "The performance targets set within PEPMIS often feel unrealistic and don't consider the unique challenges we face in our roles."*
- "Some employees experience resistance to change, finding it hard to adapt to the new system compared to traditional methods."*

These results suggest that employees encounter multiple difficulties during the implementation of PEPMIS, including technical problems, insufficient training, usability issues, and reluctance to adapt. This indicates that enhancing system reliability, delivering thorough training, and supplying immediate support are essential for tackling these issues. Furthermore, the results suggest that more practical goal-setting and approaches to facilitate the transition may improve employee acceptance and performance.

The TANESCO officials were asked with this question: was the training for PEPMIS sufficient? During the interview, five interviewees asserted that:

- "The training was basic and didn't cover all the practical aspects we needed to handle real-life scenarios."*
- "It wasn't sufficient; many of us had to learn through trial and error after the initial sessions."*
- "The training focused on theory but lacked hands-on exercises to build confidence in using the system."*
- "The duration was too short to fully understand the system, leaving many gaps in our knowledge."*
- "While the training provided some useful insights, ongoing support would have been more effective in addressing our concerns."*

These results indicate that the training given for PEPMIS was insufficient in equipping employees for its effective use. The feedback highlights the significance of thorough, practical training that provides users with the essential skills to maneuver the system with confidence. Furthermore, this indicates a necessity for ongoing learning opportunities and assistance to close knowledge gaps and enable employees to fully leverage the system's advantages.

On the question stated "Have you experienced technical issues with PEPMIS?" seven interviewees claimed that:

- "Yes, the system often crashes during peak hours, which causes delays in completing tasks."*
- "I frequently encounter slow loading times, especially when trying to access reports or update performance data."*
- "There have been occasions where my updates didn't save, causing me to redo work and affecting my productivity."*
- "Sometimes the system freezes unexpectedly, and I lose progress, which is frustrating during tight deadlines."*
- "The lack of compatibility with some of the devices we use makes it difficult to access the system efficiently."*
- "There are instances when certain features don't work as expected, which creates confusion and slows down performance."*
- "Technical glitches occur regularly, leading to inefficiencies and disruptions in my workflow."*

These results emphasize that technical problems are a major issue for employees utilizing PEPMIS, affecting their productivity and performance. The recurring system failures, sluggish loading speeds, and data loss indicate that the technical infrastructure might not be tailored for extensive use. This indicates that enhancing system reliability, device compatibility, and overall performance is essential for the system to effectively satisfy employees' needs.

Again, the researcher was interested to know how PEPMIS has affected employees' workflow. During the interview, five interviewees noted that:

"PEPMIS has streamlined my workflow by providing a clear structure and allowing me to prioritize tasks efficiently."

"At times, the system slows down my workflow due to technical glitches, especially when trying to update or retrieve data quickly."

"It has helped by making performance expectations more transparent, which in turn improves my time management and task organization."

"PEPMIS has somewhat disrupted my workflow because it requires extra steps for data entry, which can be time-consuming."

"It has improved my workflow overall by making tasks more measurable and trackable, ensuring that nothing gets overlooked."

These results indicate that although PEPMIS has typically enhanced workflow by facilitating task prioritization and clarity, there are also issues that obstruct efficiency. The system's capability to optimize procedures strengthens its promise to boost productivity; however, technical problems and extra data entry requirements suggest that more intuitive and effective processes are needed. This suggests that although PEPMIS can enhance workflow, overcoming its existing limitations will be crucial to fully leveraging its efficiency in aiding employees' tasks.

The researcher also quets Arusha City Council officials about what difficulties employees find with PEPMIS. During the interview, six interviewees claimed that:

"One of the main difficulties is the lack of adequate user support when issues arise; it takes too long to resolve problems."

"The system is often complicated to navigate, especially for those of us who are not very tech-savvy."

"Sometimes the data input process is cumbersome, requiring multiple steps that could be simplified for efficiency."

"The system can be unresponsive at times, especially when multiple people are using it simultaneously, which delays our work."

"There's a lack of clarity in some of the performance criteria, making it difficult to know exactly what is expected."

"PEPMIS doesn't always sync well with other systems we use, which causes confusion and duplication of effort."

These results indicate that employees encounter major difficulties with PEPMIS, such as insufficient user assistance, system intricacy, and technical shortcomings. The challenges in maneuvering through the system and the awkward data input process suggest that a more intuitive interface and simplified workflows are necessary. The absence of clear performance standards and problems with system alignment emphasize the need for better communication and integration with additional platforms.

The researcher was interested to know How has resistance from others impacted PEPMIS. During the interview, four interviewees noted that:

"Resistance from some colleagues has slowed down the overall adoption of PEPMIS, as they are reluctant to embrace the new system."

"The resistance has created a divide among employees, with some refusing to use the system, making collaboration more difficult."

"It has impacted the effectiveness of PEPMIS, as those resistant to change often cause delays and misunderstandings in performance tracking."

"Resistance has created some tension within the team, as those using the system effectively feel frustrated with those who aren't fully on board."

These results indicate that employee resistance has greatly obstructed the seamless execution and efficiency of PEPMIS. This underscores the notion that organizational change can encounter difficulties when employees do not completely back new systems. The separation between users and non-users suggests that

increased effort is required to handle change, including focused communication and assistance to alleviate concerns.

The researcher sought to know how effective the support is for PEPMIS issues. In the interview, seven respondents claimed that:

"The support is not very effective; it often takes too long for issues to be addressed, which impacts my productivity."

"The support team is helpful, but they are often overwhelmed with requests, leading to delayed responses and unresolved issues."

"In some cases, the support is efficient, but more often than not, I have to follow up multiple times before my issue is resolved."

"While the support staff are knowledgeable, they don't always provide solutions that solve the problem completely."

"The support system feels disjointed, and sometimes I don't even know who to reach out to for assistance."

"I find the support process to be somewhat confusing; there are no clear guidelines on how to escalate issues effectively."

"Though the support team tries to help, the delay in response times severely affects my work and hampers the system's usability."

These results suggest that the assistance for PEPMIS concerns is not as efficient as it could be, with slow response times and ambiguity in the support procedure. This indicates that the support infrastructure requires considerable enhancement to guarantee faster and more effective problem-solving. The fragmented communication and excessive workload encountered by the support team suggest that a more efficient approach, defined escalation processes, and sufficient resources for the support team are required.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Many respondents reported experiencing difficulties with the system's user interface, which was perceived as complex and not user-friendly, particularly for less tech-savvy staff. This contradicts the findings of Mkongo and Macha (2023), who discovered that effectively designed systems are usually intuitive and user-friendly for everyone, irrespective of their technical skills. Arusha City Council might have to rethink the interface design to guarantee accessibility for all employees, especially for those who are not as tech-savvy. Streamlining the system's interface and incorporating user-friendly functionalities would promote easier navigation and improve the overall user experience. Furthermore, providing focused training sessions for employees with different technical skill levels could aid in addressing the challenges created by the system's intricacy, promoting wider acceptance and effective utilization of the system throughout the organization.

In this study, technical issues, such as frequent system downtime and slow processing speeds, were also highlighted as significant barriers to effective usage. Contingency Theory indicates that the success of any system depends on the ability to adapt and respond to the specific challenges within an organization. Nonetheless, Shah et al. (2020) suggested that technological systems need to be dependable and properly backed to guarantee that their desired results are accomplished. Given these results, Arusha City Council ought to focus on enhancing the technical framework of PEPMIS by tackling system outages and guaranteeing quicker processing times. Frequent system updates and committed IT support are crucial for overcoming these obstacles. Moreover, incorporating a proactive feedback mechanism for users can aid in quickly identifying and addressing technical problems, promoting smoother system functionality and improved employee performance.

Moreover, insufficient initial training and lack of ongoing support contributed to confusion and resistance among some employees, impeding the full adoption of PEPMIS. In the same vein, Al-Dmour (2020) noted that insufficient training and the absence of ongoing support are significant obstacles to the effective implementation of new systems, frequently leading to employee disengagement and reduced system usage. Likewise, Matimbwa et al. (2021) discovered that organizations lacking in regular training and support during system changes experience increased resistance and reduced productivity. For the Arusha City Council, it is

essential to emphasize thorough initial training that encompasses both theoretical and practical elements of the system. Furthermore, creating a strong support network and providing ongoing refresher training would aid in reducing confusion and resistance, thus enhancing the overall acceptance and utilization of PEPMIS.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the challenges faced during PEPMIS implementation are significant barriers to its success. Issues such as system complexity, inadequate training, and technical glitches have hindered the system's full potential. These challenges not only slowed down the adoption process but also led to frustrations among employees. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from both management and technical teams to streamline the system's usability, offer continuous support, and ensure that employees are adequately equipped to use the system effectively.

The study recommended that Arusha City Council focus on improving the system's user interface and addressing the technical issues by investing in better IT infrastructure. Additionally, providing comprehensive, ongoing training and dedicated technical support will help ensure that employees are more comfortable using the system and can fully engage with its features.

This study recommends that PEPMIS be better integrated with other performance management systems within the public sector to streamline operations and improve efficiency. By linking PEPMIS with other human resource systems, Arusha City Council can create a unified approach to performance evaluation, ensuring a more cohesive and efficient process. Additionally, investing in the technological infrastructure supporting PEPMIS is crucial for addressing issues such as system failures and delays. Enhancing the technological foundation will ensure that the system runs smoothly and employees can rely on it for real-time data. Also, the study highlights the importance of leadership in the successful implementation of PEPMIS, suggesting that strong support from management is necessary to drive system adoption and address any resistance among employees.

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