# Employees Performance in Public Service Organizations: Ethiopia, Tigray

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**Abstract:**
The purpose of this study is to investigate the performance level of public organization employees in Ethiopia, Tigray region. Data was collected from purposively sampled five public organizations and 264 sample employees were selected using simple random sampling technique. Structured questionnaire of Individual Work performance Theory of Koopmans etal(2014) which is validated and able to measure the overall performance of employee in anywhere was adopted. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The analysis techniques used in this study were descriptive statistics of frequency distribution; mean, standard division and one way ANOVA were used. The finding indicates that the recent performance evaluation result of the employee is on average high. Moreover, the performance dimension value according to the study is that task performance is valued high. It is to mean employees of the public organization are very good enough in their technical or core activities where they support it through knowledge, skills and abilities. The conceptual performances as well do the same high like task performance. This result could indicate public organization employees of the sample are supportive enough to give their commitment beyond what is expected of them. The other dimension of performance is the counterproductive work behavior that has been analyzed reversely has value averagely high. Hence, employees of the sampled organizations don't behave opposite to the well being and advantage of their organization.

**Key words:** task performance, contextual performance, counterproductive work behavior, performance, and public organizations

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Femi (2014) to stay profitable in the highly challenging and competitive global market economy, all factors of production, i.e. men, machine, method, market, money and materials, should be wisely managed. Among the factors of production, the human resource constitutes the biggest challenge because unlike other inputs, employee management demands skilful handling of thoughts, feelings and emotions to secure highest productivity. As Motowidlo, Borman, and Schrnit (1997) presented Performance is behavior with an evaluative component, behavior that can be evaluated as positive or negative for individual or organizational effectiveness. Results are the route through which an individual's performance helps or hinders an organization in reaching its goals, and this is what makes it appealing to focus on results when considering individual performance. This study investigates the performance of public organization employees using the Individual Work performance Theory of Koopmans etal(2014) which is validated and able to measure the overall performance of employee in anywhere. The dimensions of Individual Work Performance Theory are: Task performance which is used to measure core activity of work, contextual work performance is also used to measure the voluntary support of colleague and organization beyond own responsibility, and counterproductive work behavior is the essence in which employees engage in undesirable or destructive activities. Therefore, this study tries to analyze the public organization performance level of employee by looking the data collected from sample respondents. In-addition by using ANOVA comparison is made based on demographic characteristics of the respondent towards their performance. The performance result of the employees is also discussed descriptively.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The reliability of the performance dimension was tested using Cronbach's alpha and revealed value of 0.742, 0.674, and 0.798 for Task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior respectively. Therefore, all the values range in the acceptable category. The research design for this study was descriptive research to assess the motivation of public organizations. The populations of this study were permanent employees of the public service organizations in the Tigray region. The study region is sub-divided in to 7 administrative zones and 53 weredas. Taking some sound criteria's like that of offices which have much interaction with customers, relatively offices with higher contributions to the economy of the state, and offices with large number of employees are included in the sample purposive; to name the purposively selected public organization office: revenue and customs authority, health office (including hospitals and health service centers), trade and industry, urban development office, and HR and civil service office. From each sample unit that is from the employees 200 sample sizes were planned to be selected using simple random sampling. Accordingly, 200 questionnaires for the employee of the above indicated office were selected. However, 150 questionnaires were found properly filled and returned from the employees who accounts 75% response rate. Moreover, at later time I realized that for the

purpose of analysis; I need to have more respondents to make reliable analysis. So that I just collected additional information from employees by distributing 114 questionnaires and collected carefully. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaires. Structured closed ended questionnaire scales were adopted from different writers. Accordingly, to assess the performance of the employees, the researcher was used the performance evaluation of employees form the records of the organization which is held bi-annually. Since secondary data will not enough to conclude how best the employees are performing, primary data was collected to validate the secondary data using employee job performance scale of Individual Work Performance Questionnaires adopted from KOOPMANS, (2014). Once data was collected, it was necessary to employ statistical techniques to analyze the information; the study is qualitative and was used SPSS version 20 as a toll to analyze the collected data. The collected data was described using statistical procedures of frequency distribution, mean standard deviation, one way ANOVA.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. Respondent's Profile

Table 3.1 respondent's profile characteristic

| Sex | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 156 | 59.1 | 59.1 | 59.1 |
| Female | 108 | 40.9 | 40.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| **Age** | | | | |
| below 25 | 69 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 26.1 |
| 26-35 | 74 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 54.2 |
| 36-45 | 70 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 80.7 |
| 46-55 | 25 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 90.2 |
| greater than 55 | 26 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| **education level** | | | | |
| Diploma | 67 | 25.4 | 25.4 | 25.4 |
| first degree | 173 | 65.5 | 65.5 | 90.9 |
| master and above | 24 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| **experience in your current office only** | | | | |
| less than 3 years | 134 | 50.8 | 50.8 | 50.8 |
| 4-6 years | 85 | 32.2 | 32.2 | 83.0 |
| 7-10 years | 30 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 94.3 |
| greater than 10 years | 15 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| **the government office you are currently working** | | | | |
| Revenue and custom authority office | 41 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| Health office(hospitals and health centers) | 53 | 20.1 | 20.1 | 35.6 |
| trade and industry | 62 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 59.1 |
| urban development office | 63 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 83.0 |
| HR and Civil service office | 45 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: field survey, 2017

**Demographic data discussion**

As indicated in the above table 3.1 demographic data of respondents is presented in the following way: The sex proportion of the respondent is 59.1% male and 40.9 female, where it approaches to proportionality. The age of the respondent is grouped into five categories and respondents distribution is somewhat proportional for the age category of below25, from 26 up-to 35, and from 36-45; where it is 26.1%, 28%, and 26.5% respectively. Whereas, the age category from 46 up to 55 and greater than 55 represents 9.5% and 9.8% of the respondents respectively and covers smaller proportion than the other age categories. According to this data it is possible to say majority of the sample respondent lay in a young age. Respondents profile with respect to education level, three option is given to replay for the respondent; accordingly the majority of the respondent (65.5%) do have first degree, with a small proportion (9.1%) of respondent do have masters and above, and the remaining(25.4%) have diploma. More ever, the researcher

put four categories to identify the experience of respondents in their current office. Hence, large proportion of respondent (50.8%) do have an experience of less than three years in their current working organization, again the next largest proportion (32.2%) of sample respondent replay they do have 4 to 6 years of experience in the current organization, where 11.4% of respondent do have an experience of 7 to 10 years in the current working organization, and the remaining few proportion (5.7%) do have a service of greater than 10 years in the current working organization. Based on the experiences of the respondents it do have an implication; employees of the sampled organizations my not stay longer time in their organizations. Though, it is not the scope of the researcher to assess the turn over intention and turnover rate of public organization but through way I would like to suggest to be investigated detail as employee turnover is used as factor of de-motivation. The sample employees selected from the 5 public organizations were done proportionately; because of the return rate variability it shows a slight difference. Otherwise organizations seem somewhat evenly distributed. Except respondents from Revenue and custom authority office represent 15.5% slightly minimal, respondents of Health office(hospital and health center) account 20.1%, Trade and Industry respondent represent 23.5%, Urban Development office represent 23.9%, and HR and Civil Service office represent 17%

## 3.2. Performance Evaluation Result
Table 3.2 performance evaluation result of respondents

| performance result | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Medium | 49 | 18.6 | 18.6 | 18.6 |
| High | 137 | 51.9 | 51.9 | 70.5 |
| very high | 78 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 264 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: field survey, 2017

The respondents have been asked to put their recent performance evaluation result from the alternatives of: very low, low, medium, high, and very high. Accordingly the sample respondents' response ranges from medium to high as indicated in table 3.2. Majority of the respondents' evaluation rate is high which accounts 51.9% of the respondents' next is very high 29.5%, and medium 18.6%. Therefore, it is possible to conclude the performance result of sampled employees is in average high. According to Fekete and Rozenberg (2014) the evaluation of employee performance is also a valuable tool and an essential element of the functioning of any company. Evaluations are used by managers as a motivational tool to communicate performance expectations to employees and provide them with feedback. The evaluation process also identifies areas where an employee needs to improve. It can also provide opportunities for recognition, positive reinforcement, and performance improvement of the employees.

## 3.3. Item By Item Descriptions Of Employee Performance
**Table. 3.3 Item by item description of employee performance**

| Task performance | N | Mini. | Maxi. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.3220 | .63973 |
| my planning was optimal | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.1364 | .56881 |
| I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.3220 | .62773 |
| I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.2727 | .61156 |
| I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort | 264 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.2500 | .63336 |
| Contextual | | | | | |
| I took on extra responsibilities | 264 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.1288 | .71279 |
| I started new tasks myself, when my old ones were finished | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.0871 | .62580 |
| I took on challenging work tasks, when available | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.1932 | .63230 |
| I worked at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date | 264 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.0682 | .72640 |
| I worked up keeping my job skills up-to-date | 264 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.1894 | .65412 |
| I came up with creative solutions to new problems | 264 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 3.8523 | .61427 |
| I kept looking for new challenges in my job | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 3.9697 | .64010 |
| I actively participate in work meetings | 264 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.1212 | .71412 |
| Counterproductive work behavior | | | | | |
| I complained about unimportant matters at work | 264 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.3788 | .48601 |
| I made problems greater than they were at work | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.4394 | .50484 |
| I focused in the negative aspect a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.4394 | .51232 |
| I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspect of my work | 264 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.6667 | .47230 |
| I spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work | 264 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.6894 | .46362 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 264 | | | | |

Source: field survey, 2017

Let me explain the item by item description of employee performance depict in table 3.3. to start with the items under task performance: the sample employees' response to the question if they manage their work and finish it on time rated averagely 4.3 which indicates they are good planer and accomplished what is expected of them. The optimality of their plan was rated averagely 4.1 where it is shows high rate. The replay to the question, does they keep in mind what they would like to achieve is rated averagely 4.3 which can be considered as high. Respondents' also rate averagely 4.2 for the ability of differentiating main issue from side issues and could be taken as they are good enough in prioritizing their assignments. The replay of the respondent have they able to perform their work with a minimum effort and time rated 4.3 which is an indication of good in resource utilization of effectively and efficiently. Therefore, from this it is possible to conclude the employees of the public service are very good in performing their core assignment. Moreover, the items under contextual work performance result reveals: the response to the question if they took an extra responsibility is rated averagely 4.1, so it could be an indication of the employee that they are ready to cover another assignment in-addition to their regular assignment if the organization is looking to do so. They rated 4.1 which high for the question have they proceed to their next duty if they finished what they were working. However, the variability of the respondents is remarkable in this response. Respondents are ready to take challenging work if available and rate it 4.1. So that it is possible to deduce the employees are competent, skilled and committed enough to do works for the organization. They rate 4.2 for the question if they keep their knowledge up-to-date. Hence, it is possible to admit employees of the sampled public organization can keep them self parallel with the dynamism of this world. In-addition sample employees did also keep their skill up-to-date and rate it averagely 4.1 which can make them ready to fit them self with the requirement of changing environment. The ability they have to solve problems creatively rate 3.9 which is moderate but minimally rated in comparison to the other statements; whereas, respondents have shown higher variability. Their expectation towards more challenging work is rated averagely 4.0 which makes them they are read enough for challenging work. They are also above average in participating in work meetings; the rate is 4.1. We can understand that employees of public service organization are committed to perform beyond their job description. Next goes the item by item result discussion of counterproductive work behavior of employee performance. For the question are they complain about unimportant matters at work, respondents rated it 4.4 which is high; so this is an indication that considerable number of employees' are not complain for non value adding issues in work. Respondents rated 4.4 for the question are they made worsen the problems greater than they were at work. This rate implies that employees are not facilitating problems to occur than it was in the work. 4.4 rates is given by sample respondents for the question if they focused in the negative aspect of the work situation instead of the work situation. Hence we can understand from this employee are not taking their time and effort for negative work situations. Respondents rated 4.7 which is high for the question whether they speak negative things with their colleague. 4.7 is the rate given if they speak negative about the organization with outsiders which is again a high point; where employees are positive to their organizations with outsider. One thing to be remained is these statements were negative, whereas reverse was done before the analysis has been undertaken. Therefore, it is possible to say public service organizations employees are not contradicting the interest of organizational growth and stability.

## 3.4. Variable Statistics of Employee Performance
**Table .3.4 Descriptive Statistics of employee performance dimensions**

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Task performance | 264 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.2606 | .43283 |
| Contextual performance | 264 | 2.75 | 5.00 | 4.0762 | .40057 |
| CPWB | 264 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 4.5227 | .36304 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 264 |  |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

According to Koopmans *etal* (2014) the IWPQ incorporates all three dimensions of IWP (task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior), whose operationalization was developed and refined based on a generic population (workers in all types of occupations), and includes no opposing items. The IWPQ is a generic instrument, thus, it is suitable for workers in all types of occupations (i.e., blue, pink, and white collar workers). Therefore, to start with the task performance dimension: sampled respondents in this study rated averagely 4.3 which is high. It is to mean employees of the public organization are very good enough in their technical or core activities where they support it through knowledge, skills and abilities. These activities are commonly included within formal job descriptions and are what is focused upon by most traditional forms of job description. Johar and Yahya (2013) presented that public servants should engage in sportsmanship, whereby they do not complain about meeting job deadlines.

They are also expected to show some level of carefulness by performing their tasks beyond the minimum required level; and be considerate by taking preventive steps to a avoid problems with others. Public servants are expected to stay focused on work so that all tasks can be completed on time. In other words, OCB is required of public servants to ensure effective overall functioning of the public service organization and, for this reason; OCB is evaluated as task performance instead of OCB by the supervisors in the public sector. Many activities may not include within the domain of task performance activities but have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness. Contextual or citizenship performance involves activities directed at maintaining the interpersonal and psychological environment that needs to exist to allow the technical or core task to operate. Moreover, employees of an organization could engage voluntarily in some supportive activities out of their mandate; whereas, it has value in the organizations overall

performance. In this study the respondents' rate their performance with regard to contextual performance is 4.1 which is high again. This result could indicate public organization employees of the sample are supportive enough to give their commitment beyond what is expected of them. Johar and Yahya (2013) indicated that the job title suggests the core tasks of the public servants are to serve customers in the public sector. As far as public service is concerned, the job nature in this sector requires public servants to do beyond what is stated in their job descriptions in order to fulfill the needs of multiple stakeholders.

OCB consists of voluntary behaviors performed by employees to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization. When attending to the needs of clients, public servants are expected to engage in sportsmanship by showing a positive attitude and not complaining about having to do additional tasks so as to meet different expectations. They rate 4.5 for the counterproductive work behavior performance dimension which is very high. Hence, employees of the sampled organizations don't behave opposite to the well being and advantage of their organization. This is analyzed by reversing the respondents view.

**Table 3.5 the overall Descriptive Statistics of performance**

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| performance | 264 | 3.58 | 4.83 | 4.2865 | .23111 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 264 |  |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

Where the performance dimensions average value indicate above 4 in table 1.4 individually, the overall performance rate of this study do have show average value of 4.29(which is true) in table 3.5. Therefore the employees of the public organization do exert their maximum effort to perform organizations objectives.

**3.5. H1: Effects of Demographic Factors on Performance:** As Iqbal (2015) suggested earlier study on workplace diversity intends that diversity can be either unfavorable or favorable for worker performance. I will present the impact of demographic factors on performance using ANOVA in the under depict tables. However, there is a not consistent finding in the result by different researchers.

**Table 3.6 one way ANOVA test of sex**

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .132 | 1 | .132 | 2.477 | .117 |
| Within Groups | 13.916 | 262 | .053 |  |  |
| Total | 14.048 | 263 |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

Table 3.6 indicates that the 0.117 value is greater than the significant value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis there is not significance difference between male and female to affect work performance is rejected. In other way the alternative hypothesis that there is significance difference between male and female to affect performance is accepted. However, the study by Gitonga, Kamaara, and Orwa(2016) and Qureshi etall (2013) conclude that the composition of different gender of employees

are endowed with different capabilities that can work together to promote positive organizational outcomes. Different gender in work teams can also be a source of harmonious relations and favorable attitudes within an organization. This can further work to promote contribution of different viewpoints and ideas thus enhancing team performance. But still to the extent of my access there is no suggestion either of the gender perform better or least.

**Table 3.7 one way ANOVA test of age**

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .695 | 4 | .174 | 3.372 | .010 |
| Within Groups | 13.352 | 259 | .052 |  |  |
| Total | 14.048 | 263 |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

Table 3.7 depicts that there is no significance difference in the age category of public organization employees to affect employee performance because p value of 0.10 is less than the significance value of 0.05 and equal to the significance value of 10%. Therefore, alternative hypothesis there is significance difference between the difference age categories is rejected. However it is known that at older age (retirement) the physical and mental stamina decreases; which causes the reduction of people performance. According to this finding it is supported by researchers Joseph & Chinnathambi (2015) age is less important indicator of performance than do individual skills. They added that there is more variability in work performance within age

groups than between age groups. However, Gitonga, Kamaara, and Orwa(2016) and Qureshi etall (2013) their finding indicated that age has an impact on performance, young employees can be more creative, learn faster and can drive innovation in an organization as compared with older employees. Certain employees approaching their retirement age may unconsciously begin to disengage with the organizations they work for as they begin to prepare for their retirement. They may constantly absent themselves from work or report late to work. They may also spend more time seeing doctors due to age related illnesses as opposed to younger employees. Moreover, in contrast, Mohamed and Juli (2010) claimed that the older the employee to be, the

higher work performance he has. They also substantiate their finding by citing the work of Borghans and Nelen (2009) who noted that younger employees have lower work performance compared to older workers.

**Table 3.8 one way ANOVA test of education level**

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .084 | 2 | .042 | .790 | .455 |
| Within Groups | 13.963 | 261 | .053 |  |  |
| Total | 14.048 | 263 |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

Table 3.8 indicates that the p value is 0.455, greater than the significant value of 0.05. Then the null hypothesis there is no significance difference between education levels in work performance is rejected. In other way it is to mean that there is statistically significance effect in performance based on education level. Moreover, this finding is supported by the finding of Ng and Feldman (2009), Qureshi etall (2013), and

Iqbal (2015) findings indicated that educated employees, as a group, perform more effectively at task, citizenship, and counterproductive performance, and that certainly predict well for the fulfillment of managers' expectations of highly educated workers. Therefore they have admit education difference do have an impact on employee performance.

**Table 3.9 one way ANOVA test of experience**

| Experience | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .125 | 3 | .042 | .781 | .505 |
| Within Groups | 13.922 | 260 | .054 |  |  |
| Total | 14.048 | 263 |  |  |  |

Source: field survey, 2017

Table 3.9 indicates that the p value is 0.505, greater than the significant value of 0.05. Then the null hypothesis there is no significance difference between experiences in work performance is rejected. In other way it is to mean that there is significance difference in performance based on experiences of employees. This study is supported by Iqbal (2015) finding

indicates that the relationship between experience diversity of employees is negative. Gitonga, Kamaara, and Orwa(2016) and Qureshi etall (2013) also view experienced workers as being more aware of the organization and well versed with the operational environment thus being able to identify and manage business risk more effectively.

## 3.6. Comparison of Performance By Office

Table 3.10 performance * the government office Cross tabulation

| | | The government office you are currently working | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Performance | | Revenue and custom authority office | Health office(hospitals and health centers) | trade and industry | urban development office | HR and Civil service office | Total |
| 4 | Count | $31_{a, b}$ | $43_{a, b}$ | $51_{a, b}$ | $46_b$ | $41_a$ | 212 |
| | % of Total | 11.7% | 16.3% | 19.3% | 17.4% | 15.5% | 80.3% |
| 5 | Count | $10_{a, b}$ | $10_{a, b}$ | $11_{a, b}$ | $17_b$ | $4_a$ | 52 |
| | % of Total | 3.8% | 3.8% | 4.2% | 6.4% | 1.5% | 19.7% |
| | Count | 41 | 53 | 62 | 63 | 45 | 264 |
| | % of Total | 15.5% | 20.1% | 23.5% | 23.9% | 17.0% | 100.0% |

Source: field survey, 2017

Using crosstab of Z-test from the SPSS, the response of the sample was compared their performance level in table 3.10, indicated above based on their working office and the result indicates there is no statistically significance difference in between the offices at 0.05. Respondents' replay ranges from 4(true) to 4(very true). Moreover, in almost all the offices the motivation level of the sample respondents' response lay in 4 (true) which are done by rounding to the nearest whole number.

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