



*Original Research Article*

# Career development and advancement of human resources –how they influence the performance qualities of local government administration

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Managing career development and advancement in human resources is a very important concept because the human factor as a resource can generate comparative advantages for organizations. Therefore, in today's highly competitive environment, career development and advancement of human resources is the key to the success of any organization and an important resource to be cultivated and managed as a strategy that is required by all organizations. Therefore this study's objective is to explain the link between career development and performance increase in public sector using combined methodologies and tools, as well as combining the analyses of primary and secondary data. There is an increasing rate of change in our organizations and in the knowledge and skills we need to perform our jobs. Career ladders are rapidly shrinking or disappearing as reorganizations lead to flatter structures. This is a much more problematic issue in transition countries and specifically in the public sector, where possibilities are sometimes limited. There is an ever-increasing need to keep learning in order to keep up with the rapid growth in knowledge and the rate of change in our workplace environments. This paper tries to analyze the impact of career development opportunities in quality increase of public services in Kosovo.

**Key words:** Career development, human resources, performance, quality, local governance, Kosovo

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is widely recognized that public sector performance quality is directly linked with motivation and career development. As well, motivation as a concept is very difficult to define and study therefore the aim of this research is to analyze the specific component of the motivation-carrier development as a motivator for performance and quality increase of services. This study will enable the deduction of conclusions that identify factors that will be key for an objective assessment of quality performance increase based on career development possibilities in local governance in Kosovo.

The approach used in this study includes a structured questionnaire used to collect (primary) data from respondents while secondary data were collected from

books, textbooks, online articles, magazines amongst others. The questionnaire elicits data as regards respondents' motivation regarding their performance assessment within their municipalities of work.

The analyses of the findings shows that the importance of career development is affected by performance assessment. Setting standards and building evaluation systems help strengthen governance of local authorities. In this way municipalities will improve transparency, accountability and build a culture in local government management thus leading to better service delivery to the citizens of those municipalities. It is important to develop standards for evaluating performance at all levels of local authority. Measuring performance will be qualitative when

performance standards are objective, measurable, realistic, and transparent to all employees. Standards should be written, stating the conditions and specific measurements that will be used in order to assess performance. This research studies the basic knowledge of scientific theories in terms of aspects of human resource management and the performance evaluation indicators of employee motivation in local governments in Kosovo. The data and results will provide additional information for managers of rural and urban municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo about their drafting strategies for a more efficient management of human resources which will increase the quality of services at the local level and beyond.

### Problem definition

Lack of objectives and realistic assessment of the performance of human resources can have an impact on career advancement of employees and this presents a problem about achieving results appropriate to working in local governments in Kosovo. The lack of a standard rate and qualitative assessment of the performance of human resources in local government in Kosovo, calls for a study which will derive conclusions and generalizations about setting standards and indicators for an objective assessment in order to advance the local government's employees (Shundi, 2013). Moreover, various deficiencies such as lack of investment strategy for recruiting new employees, qualified and suitable for business processes results in the absence of effective realization of workplace obligations.

The importance of skilled human resources resulting from the need to cope with different competition, with a rapid development of computing and technology and the need for growth of new services becomes a necessity specifically in transition countries where the multidimensional approach of working is a key element for employment. Vague plans (or funds) for staff training makes it difficult for them to face different work processes, managing people or dealing with market competition. Moreover, lack of promotions make the employees feel less satisfied and appreciated at work, and even more uncertain about their livelihood. According to Drucker (2006), the most valuable asset of the 20th century is production machinery but the most valuable asset of the 21st century, for all types of organizations, are knowledgeable workers and their productivity. Therefore in a society that moves quickly, knowledge is the key to development.

This paper tries to show through empirical evaluation the real situation of human resources in local governments in Kosovo. Consequently, the objectives of this study are:

- Analysis of standards for assessing the performance of resources;
- Evaluation of recruitment Human Resources;
- Analysis of sharing specific funds for promotion and development of career resources;
- Understanding how human resource motivation improves performance and value creation;

- Assess how employees perceive and contribute to the process of creating value.

### Hypothesis

This study uses primary and secondary data and will attempt to analyse performance evaluation of local government employees in Kosovo. It will also make an effort to respond to the research objective thus: "Establishment and development of career advancement and the impact of performance quality "

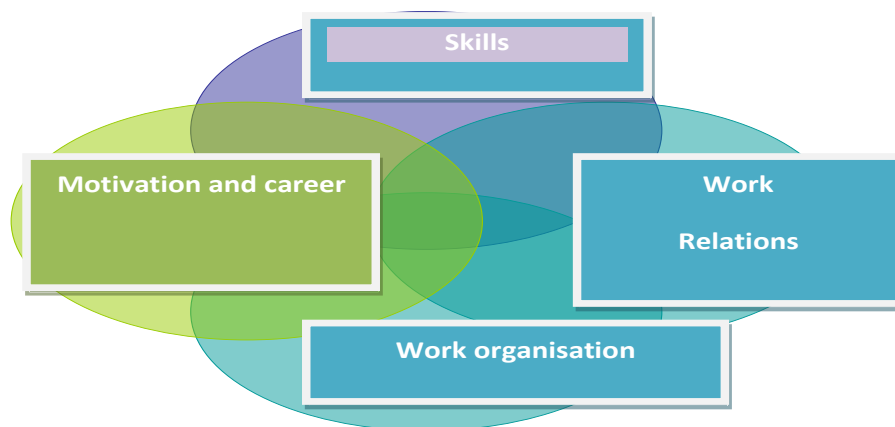
### The concept of human resources

Human resource management (HRM) is a relatively new approach to people management in any organization. People are considered a key source in this approach. HRM deals with human dimension in the management of an organization therefore organizations through human resource manage people, their selection, develop their skills, their motivation to higher levels of achievement and success, as well as ensuring the maintenance of their level of engagement in all-important activities. Human resource management is therefore responsible for maintaining good relations in the organization, and the development of individuals and their integration into institutions.

Human resource management basically has to do with managing people in a way that rewards the contribution of every person working for the organization. To realize this goal, the organization chooses the policies and practices that can help in achieving these objectives. According to Cross and Carbery (2013), some of these practices and processes are as follows:

1. How are officials recruited and selected?
2. How are they paid and rewarded?
3. In what conditions do they work?
4. What training and development opportunities should organizations organize for their career development?
5. How are employees who break the rules of the organization dealt with?
6. How does the organization ensure that everyone is treated equally?

Thus, human resource management is an activity that organizations and companies undertake to recruit, retain, and advance their workers. Boxall and Purcell (2011) conceptualizes job performance as a function of possibilities (such as knowledge and skills that workers need for the realization of their duties), motivation (benefits that workers seek to motivate them) and organization of work (the way work and organizations are structured to enable employees perform better). Included are the relations arising from work (policies, programs and practices that govern relations between employers and employees) that is, the relation between managers and workers as the main key function of human resource management (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Conceptualization of performance from work  
Source: Boxall and Purcel (2011).

**Table 1.** Differences between personnel management and human resources management

Variable	Personal management	Human resources management
Time and planing	Short, reactiv and ad hoc	Long, proactive, strategic, integrated
Psychological contract	Adaption	Dedication
Employee relations	Pluralist, colectivist, low confidence	Unitarist, individualist, high confidence
Structurs and systems	Bureaucratic, centralized, formal	Organic, flexible
Roles	Specialist, professionalism	Integrated into the management
Evaluation criteria	Cost minimization	Maximal utilization of human resources

Source: Guest (1987).

**The difference between personnel management and human resource management**

Management staff (personnel management) is often regarded as an old name for the human resource management and today, in some organizations there is no difference between personnel department and human resources department. However, according to Abraham (1987), HRM can also mean a particular philosophy about the role of HRM in organizations, and how people develop and prepare to achieve organizational goals. The traditional view of HRM can be explained by analysing the four objectives which form the basis of human resource activities. These can be identified as employment, performance, change management and administration objectives. Table 1

**Staff recruitment**

Recruitment of staff ensures that appropriate staff are available at the right time and in the right place. This includes identifying the nature of work and the implementation of a process of selection and recruitment to ensure the most appropriate staff for the workplace (Griffin, 2006). Like other performance objectives, various remuneration packages and a process of development

should be planned for the recruited staff. Many companies use various means for promoting and motivating staff and therefore decrease their possibility of abandoning the organization.

**Performance objective**

As a continuation of the objectives of the staff are the objectives around improving staff performance. Staff should be put through appropriate training and should be motivated to perform their obligations. This can be done and facilitated through staff development processes (Amstrong, 2006).

Performance targets can be introduced through an evaluation system, where employers invite staff members to discuss about their performance, ambitions and plans in the future and thus develop strategies to enable them to be met (Andersen and Fagerhaug, 2002). Many organizations use reward systems, and enable staff additional training and professional development.

**Objectives about change management**

The objectives around managing change are necessary if organizations want to be effective and develop into a new organization and movement that can keep up with the rapid

pace of development in a modern society (Boyne and Walker, 2004). Organizations must be adaptable and flexible, which means that its policies and objectives should enable management changes with the sole purpose of pursuing changes in the entire organization (Gary, 2013). For this reason, recruitment strategies, selection and development of staff must comply with the objectives of change management.

### **Administrative objectives**

Administrative objectives must be met if the organization does not want to proceed without problems. Employees must be paid regularly, taxes must be collected in accordance with legislation, and data must be accurate and relevant to the organization's goals. Employment legislation should be respected and data properly stored. When companies expand rapidly, they need to ensure that their systems have adequate administration for their needs. According to various literatures, personnel management is viewed as focused on workforce and more operational (Cokins, 2009 and David, 2006).

Managers recruit personnel they select to perform administrative procedures in accordance with the requirements of management. Therefore, in a qualitative manager's words they act as a bridge between employer and employee. HRM can be seen as a CE (chief executive-top down) approach to the issue of strategy and count people as assets to be actively managed as part of the long-term interests of the organization.

While personnel managers can be seen as specialists, HRM can be seen as the responsibility of all managers particularly senior managers, and as such should be proactive, not reactive. Guest (1987) in his model tries to identify the differences between the personal management and Human resource management. According to this author HRM:

- Is linked to the strategic management of an organization;
- Requires commitment to organizational goals
- Focuses on individual needs and not the collective work force;
- Enables organizations to delegate power and become more flexible;
- Treats people as an asset to be used positively by the organization.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Given that human resource management is a conscious and deliberate activity, it is driven by the realization of goals, development and efficient use of these resources. Analysing and identifying human resource needs through description and job specification also achieves success in an organization (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). All empirical findings are based on data obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is data collected

through questionnaires while secondary data were collected from books, textbooks, online articles, journal articles amongst others. In this study using structured questionnaires were used to elicit data from respondents as regards their feelings about motivation from their performance assessment in the local government.

Through survey, participants were selected randomly from different municipalities of Kosovo for the study. A total of 320 workers employed in the local authority institutions were administered questionnaires containing a total of 53 structured questions. Of the total, 292 questionnaires were returned completed by the respondents. The study area included a total of 21 rural and urban municipalities in Kosovo (Table 2)

Data analysis was carried out with the SPSS and Microsoft Excel spreadsheet softwares. During the data analysis, factorial analysis showed the most important factors motivating employees when evaluating their performance.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

From the results obtained (Figure 2), the gender distribution of the employees, is 57% male, while 42.8% are female. Figure 3 shows the experience distribution of the employees with more than 80% having between 3-5 years work experience. As regards the criteria used for promotion within public local governance, 85% of the respondents think that this is crucial and very important issue.

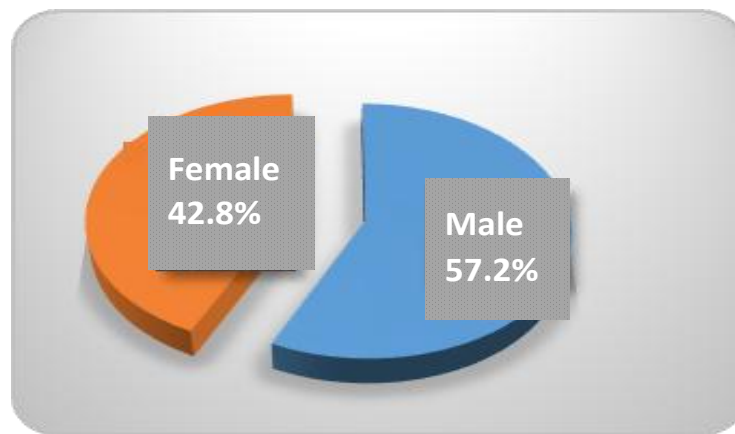
#### **Setting the standards for performance evaluation**

Setting standards and building evaluation systems in countries strengthen governance by improving transparency, accountability and building a culture in local government management and better service for citizens who gravitate to those municipalities (Armstrong, 2002). Standards of performance are approved expression of threshold performance management, requirements or expectations that must be met to assess within a certain level of performance. It is important to develop standards for performance evaluation at all levels of local authorities; groups and individuals (Decenzo and Stephens, 1989). Therefore the aim is to develop standards that clarify the perspective of workers. It focuses on the performance of key processes governing the organization, people and infrastructure. Performance elements show employees what should be done, while the setting of standards is aimed at clarifying how best to do chores (Flippo, 1984).

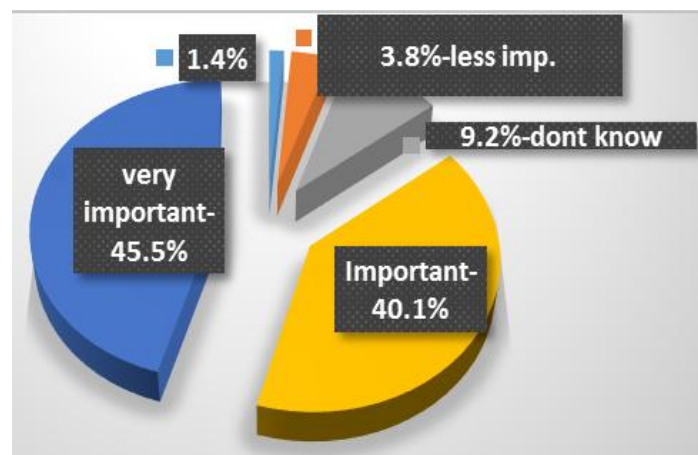
The importance of establishing standards for performance evaluation affects performance as well as increases and improves the quality of service delivery to citizens by employees in municipalities. Based on the data obtained from the research (Table 3), there is need to establish standards about performance evaluation as it is clear that majority of the respondents do not think that the municipality has set the standard for its activities about

**Table 2.** Respondents geography

Municipality	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Prishtinë	21	7.2	7.2
Prizren	19	6.5	13.7
Gjilan	21	7.2	20.9
Fushë Kosovë	16	5.5	26.4
Vushtri	15	5.1	31.5
Shtime	13	4.5	36.0
Kaçanik	13	4.5	40.4
Viti	15	5.1	45.5
Deçan	14	4.8	50.3
Dragash	13	4.5	54.8
Ferizaj	17	5.8	60.6
Gjakove	17	5.8	66.4
Kline	3	1.0	67.5
Lipjan	17	5.8	73.3
Skenderaj	6	2.1	75.3
Podujevë	15	5.1	80.5
Rahovec	15	5.1	85.6
Shterpc	15	5.1	90.8
Suharekë	8	2.7	93.5
Mitrovice	16	5.5	99.0
Mamusha	3	1.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0</b>	



**Figure 2:** Respondents by gender



**Figure 3.** Career promotion based on performance evaluation

**Table 3.** Standards for performance evaluation

<b>Standards for performance evaluation</b>	<b>Disagree totally</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
All employees are familiar with the mission and services of the municipality citizens	19.86	37.33	10.62	9.25	22.95	100.00
The municipality has set the standard for its activities around performance evaluation	19.86	55.82	17.81	2.40	4.11	100.00
The municipality selects appropriate indicators to evaluate the performance of human resources	21.92	47.95	22.95	4.11	3.08	100.00
The municipality establishes performance targets with time indicators regarding the obligations of its employees	23.63	58.22	11.99	2.40	3.77	100.00
Municipality communicates standards, indicators and targets to ensure that workers understand them	23.29	49.32	19.18	4.79	3.42	100.00
The municipality consults workers in setting standards of performance	30.48	43.84	9.59	11.99	4.11	100.00
Work is expected from me is reasonable	16.10	30.48	10.96	35.96	6.51	100.00
Municipality has announced the standards and indicators for promotion	19.86	56.51	14.38	4.45	4.79	100.00
It is unclear to me what my supervisor expects from me about my work performance	16.78	47.26	19.18	14.04	2.74	100.00
My supervisor evaluates my work performance regularly	21.58	61.64	8.22	4.45	4.11	100.00
Ways of measuring performance made me feel like part of the company	31.16	48.29	12.67	3.42	4.45	100.00

performance evaluation. Also, over 58.22% of the respondents feel that the municipality must harness the performance targets with indicators of time. As regards, the possibility of promotion by the municipality, 56.5% of employees feel that the municipalities need a better way to inform them of promotion. A key issue noticed from analysis is the fact that municipal managers delay in the performance evaluation of employees, as over 61.6% do not agree that "my supervisor assesses my work performance regularly".

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The data obtained shows that setting standards for performance evaluation is very important and directly affects performance and increases employees' productivity. Based on the data obtained from the survey:

1. Municipalities must further develop and create appropriate standards for performance evaluation of its employees;
2. Municipalities must also harness performance targets with indicators of time.
3. Municipalities should communicate clearly the way of promotion.
4. In order to resolve the issue of delay in performance

evaluation of employees, it is immediate that municipal authorities undertake measures to ensure steps to develop and implement individual development plans. This personal learning development plan should include among others:

a) Assessment: First, identify your current skills, knowledge, abilities, and interests.

b) Goals: Identify the new skills, knowledge, and experiences you would like to acquire and have. Do these goals match your personal and career interests? Are your goals in agreement with your organization's goals, mission and vision?

c) Learning purpose: Identify the gap between the current situation and the desired outcome. This will produce a statement of purpose that should clarify why you want to learn something, and what specific skills, knowledge and abilities you wish to develop.

d) Learning objective(s): Identify what skills, knowledge, and abilities are to be acquired or enhanced. Remember that this is only a plan, not a rigid promise; your plan can and should be revised as your goals change as learning occurs.

After completing the individual plan, you should evaluate the success of these activities. What insights have you gained? What new understandings do you have? What new skills, abilities and knowledge have you acquired? What

experiences did you have, and what did you learn from them? How do you feel about this process?

## Conclusions

Since the research study focuses on analyzing the motivation of human resources by assessing the performance of employees in the development plans for individual career development and for other employees in an organization, it is therefore concluded that career development is a key element in motivating employees (in local governance level in Kosovo). The research shows that there is specific need for a concrete result-oriented development process embedded in a document referred to as an individual development plan, a learning contract, MBO (management-by-objectives) for personal learning, a personal "curriculum" for learning or a plan for personal career advancement.

Setting standards and building evaluation systems help strengthen governance in local authorities. In this way, municipalities would improve transparency, accountability and build a culture in local government management and render better services to the citizens of those municipalities.

Establishing performance standards through transparency regarding workers' expectations about their assessment will be a motivator and this will affect their productivity. Therefore workers in municipalities having clear standards about their performance evaluation will be more motivated and consequently increase their performance quality and productivity. It is therefore very important to develop standards for performance evaluation at all levels of local authorities as this clarifies the perspective of workers.

Quality of performance measurement has a close connection with establishing quality standards. Standards should be written, stating the conditions and specific measures that will be used to assess performance. Performance reporting is critical and important as it affects the achievement of a successful human resources management in local authorities. This is because it relates directly to the unique performance model in achieving objectives which are the goals of the organization. This will increase communication, accountability and transparency such as workers being aware of work progress, what works well and what does not.

Across all organizations today, improving the performance and the role of performance management is a very important issue. The importance of this issue arises from the fact that all organizations face stiff competition and therefore with increasing pressure from businesses, organizations are required to be more effective and efficient in executing the best strategies with the sole purpose of being more competitive. Therefore improving performance enables organizations to be productive and competitive. In order to be competitive and advance our approach and methodologies for motivation and motivators

in public sector, besides the facts mentioned above, it is necessary to combine contemporary theories of work motivation with the circumstances in the workplace.

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