

Accountability of HR through Proper Supervision: A Case of Public Sector in Balochistan Province (Pakistan)

Dr. Jan Mohammad

Director

Institute of Management Sciences

University of Balochistan

Quetta, Pakistan

Dr. Nadir Ali Kolachi

Associate Professor

Skyline University

UAE

Abstract

Supervision is one of the most important elements that improve the accountability of public sector human resource. But this aspect of accountability is widely neglected in the public sector management in Pakistan. There is seldom any concerted effort to study and analyze the impact of supervision on the accountability of public sector employees in the country. The aim of this research article is to highlight the importance of supervision for the accountability of public sector's workers in Balochistan. The study mainly is descriptive in nature and the analysis is based on the survey of the employees of Balochistan civil secretariat. The survey is conducted through questionnaire and the employees' responses about the various aspects of supervisory role and its impact on workers performance is summarized in the study.

Keywords: Supervision, Supervisor, Accountability, Public Sector, Work Performance.

Introduction

Organizations seek to increase productivity through better utilization of their work force. To achieve gains in productivity, all members of work force in an organization must try to improve all aspects of operations¹. In the public sector organizations, employees are under obligation to give satisfactory account of their performance. Supervision is the key process by which a senior staff member helps workers to make the best use of their knowledge and skills, and improve their performance by regularly inspecting their work performance. Supervision is a mechanism to keep employees under close watch and check. Supervision ensures the productive work performance. It is the visionary watch over the work done by the members of the organizations' personnel. Supervisor is responsible for the work of other junior employees in an organization. The public sector organizations in Pakistan are bureaucratic entities and have the hierarchical structure of organization. Every official in the upper ladder of hierarchy oversee the work of employees in the lower ladder. Supervision in its restrictive sense is an official at the mid-level of hierarchy who is responsible to oversee the work of field staff. Supervisors do not do the operative work but see that it is accomplished through the efforts of others². They occupy key positions in their organizations and therefore their job is challenging and interesting. Supervisors make accountable the members of work units to contribute positively toward accomplishing the organizations goals and objectives. The public sector's declining rate of its human resource productivity is of much concern to the nation in Pakistan. Through an effective system of supervision, the public sector organizations can increase the accountability of its human resource to ensure the optimum utilization of its resources.

¹ Stephen E. Catt & Donald S. Miller, "Supervision; Working with People", 2nd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1991. p.7.

² Leslie W. Rue, Lloyed L. Byars, "Supervision; Key Link to Productivity", 3rd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1990. p.6.

Supervisors can increase productivity by promoting an efficient work environment. Supervisors initiate efficiency measures and can suggest means of efficient and effective performance as well as oversee the implementation of them. Supervision is of much concerned with the implementation process in the public sector organizations. Public sector is always blamed for failure in the implementation of public policies. Effective supervision can ensure the implementation of public policies, coordinate efforts and maximize efficiency by eliminating unnecessary activities and introducing new methods for accomplishing organizations' goals. HR formats kept changing from decades to decades as it was the case in 1960 and 1970s where HR used to be known as Personnel Management which was just focus on people as working resources. Later HRM had been divided into two as HRM itself which remained to recruitment & selection and the other one is HRD (Human Resource Development) which remained much focused on training & development. The other terms HREP (Human Resource Enterprise Planning and HRIS (Human Resource Information System) were integrated both HRM & HRD in various modern and networked aspects.

But the most important thing in any sector is the supervision of workforce which does not mean to interfere every time but a productive guidance as well. The case in public sector organizations is very challenging because of their surety in jobs. Here the HR department can play very important role in educating and coordinating the whole organization. HR must be monitored through other executive initiatives as Corporate Accountability. HR usually deals in the following but some techniques are required to achieve and create cordial atmosphere in the organizations. This helps in improving accountability. Some organizations have good HR books but rarely implement it while good companies have good employee's handbooks and they religiously follow it. But the public sector in Pakistan especially in Balochistan must have policies implemented through good supervision. HR must ensure following factors to be known as good and socially oriented support.

In the today's dynamic world, the job of supervisor has become extremely challenging. Technological and social changes have brought new dimensions to the job³. Changes in technology and office automation have brought additional dimensions, and gradually the supervisor's job evolved into a very complex one, now requiring skills and abilities never before demanded⁴.

Supervisors play a unique role in organizations. They provide a vital link in the upward and downward flow of communication and information. They communicate and inform the employees about the direction and policies of top management and also convey the suggestions, complaints and grievances of the lower employees to the top management. This role of supervisors requires good communication and interpersonal skills. Since they interact with employees, peers and upper management simultaneously, their work is very challenging.

Human beings are different from machines and equipment. They have their emotions, desires, feelings and ambitions. Each individual employee has a unique personality and a make up. Different things motivate different people. Good supervisors recognize that employees are people who have wants, needs, and desires⁵. They motivate employees and reinforce their performance through better accountability. Supervisors are team leaders to whom other employees are accountable.

One of the important roles of supervisor is to increase the productivity of work group through establishing an appropriate mechanism of accountability. Supervisor is accountable for the actions of all his subordinates. Supervisors also provide performance feedback to the employees to realize them that they are accountable for their performance to someone in the achievement of organizational goals. Employees in work unit also need to know that how they are doing individually and collectively. Supervisors should let employees know on a continuous basis the progress they are making as individuals and as a work unit team. This inculcates in them the spirit of accountability, hard work and devotion because the achievement of individual and organizational goals is an intrinsic reward that reinforces the work group performance. Similarly, if they feel that there are some deficiencies and mistakes in the previous performance, they will try to remove these mistakes in their subsequent performance. The supervisors increase accountability through providing pertinent information to the workers on what are the organizations goals.

³ Jack J. Phillips, "Improving Supervisors' Effectiveness", California: Jossey-Base, Inc. Publishers, 1985, p. 5.

⁴ Ibid. p. 6.

⁵ Stephen E. Catt & Donald S. Miller, "Supervision; Working with People", 2nd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1991. p.13.

When the employees are better informed about the goals and purposes of the organizations, this improves their understanding of work accountability for their individual performance. Sharing organizations' information by the supervisors with their employees is another means for the accountability of employees' performance. Most employees want to learn more about their organizations, their work units, and their jobs. Supervisors providing pertinent information about work related matters and the organizations, gain the support of their employees for better performance. Similarly, most employees want to grow and develop themselves in the organizations and have aspiration for greater information about their career advancement possibilities.

Effective supervision is essential for the accountability of workers in the public sector organizations. Workers are the key to an organization's survival and growth. Without them, nothing will be accomplished⁶. Supervisors must understand their employees and pay more attention to their emotions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions. They must establish a sense of moral accountability through a system of motivation. This will increase their loyalty for the organizations and also increase their satisfaction for their jobs. Supervisors can accomplish better working environment when they develop a cooperative working relationship with their subordinates. The aim of this research study is to highlight the importance of accountability through supervision for the effective utilization of human resource potential in the public sector organizations in Pakistan. The study is descriptive in nature and both primary and secondary sources of data are used.

Improving Accountability of Public Sector's Human Resources through Proper Supervision in Balochistan

The public sector's organizations can improve their performance by the effective utilization of their workforce energies. This is possible only by establishing an effective system of accountability of human resource through proper supervision. Accountability is effective when the employees are closely monitored. Employees in the public sector organizations have quite secure jobs. In majority of the cases, the criterion for the promotion of employees to higher grades in these organizations is seniority rather than merit or performance. This gives the employees less incentives to contribute according to their maximum potential to achieve organizational objectives. Lack of incentives for better performance is a major source of apathy among workers in the public sector organizations. Performance based system of promotion and reward is almost non-existent and employees working in the same grades and with the same job titles receive almost the same salary and other benefits. Work ethos does not encourage the initiative to hard work in the public sector organizations. This discourages the hard working employees. The universal practice of performance based system of promotion and reward can encourage the hard working employees to improve their performance and increase their productivity.

The public sector of Balochistan is ineffective due to cultural constraints and strong influence of land lords and tribal chiefs on politics and administration. In such a traditional society, the non-conventional methods of work motivation are very effective. The only way to influence the workers behavior to deliver according to their potential is accountability through proper supervision. The process of supervising employees may take place at all levels of an organization, from top to bottom⁷. Supervisors provide workers with a sense of purpose, coordinate their efforts, and decide on the use of resources. Worker depends on their supervisors to help them understand the organizations' expectations, the tasks they perform, and whether they are meeting those expectations⁸. Balochistan is one of the least developed provinces of Pakistan. Population of the province is highly scattered. The society in the province is highly conservative. Every matter is treated in a traditional way. The employees of the public sector even take every official matter in a very personalized and traditional way. The job related conflict sometimes turn into full fledge dispute resulting into extreme crisis. The productivity of the work unit in such circumstances declines. The role of supervision becomes very important in such a traditional society because it fits in with cultural expectations of giving more attention to senior people and obeying their commands. A supervisor plays multidimensional role. He acts as coach, informer, guide, motivator, leader and conflict avoider. All these roles are intended to increase productivity of workforce through work satisfaction. Supervisor is responsible for obtaining maximum production and maintaining a satisfied work group⁹.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Judith G. Balin, "Supervision; Skills for Managing Work and Leading People", New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995, p 2.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 4-5.

⁹ Leon C. Megginson, "Personnel; A Behavioral Approach to Administration", Georgetown: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1967, p. 214.

The philosophy and attitude of the supervisor in dealing with his subordinates contributes greatly to building loyalty to the employer, confidence in management, and increased productivity.¹⁰ The personnel function in an organization becomes effective by accountability through supervisors. Although the rank order of the individual employee performance is determined by the basic motivational factors, applied by the supervisor to the individual with his particular abilities, opportunities, and physical environment, the mean performance level of a group of employees is largely determined by the quality of supervision or leadership exhibited by its supervisors¹¹. When supervisor is better informed about the socio-cultural background of the employees, he can properly supervise them. He then understands the values, norms and traditions which guide the general perceptions of the employees. In Balochistan the workers generally display in their work behavior their socio-cultural and traditional characteristics. In such circumstances, an effective supervision is required to satisfy the workers socio-cultural needs to motivate them to contribute their maximum potential to increase productivity of their work units. In many instances employees with sufficient knowledge, skills and competencies in the public sector are reluctant to contribute to organizational efficiency due to their dissatisfaction with work environment.

An effective supervision increases productivity by the use of motivational tools without hurting the workers personnel needs. Successful supervisors also implement changes gradually in the overall context of socio-cultural environment prevailing outside the organization's premises. The supervisor and the work group [also] constitute the social environment within which the individual learns the norms and expectations for production.¹² A favorable and constructive social environment is conducive to positive individual motivation and productivity¹³. A primitive and traditional social environment may inhibit or promote motivation and influence performance as well. The success of the organization depends on how thoughtfully and fairly the supervisor manages it¹⁴. Hertzberg, a well-known motivational theorist, in his famous two factor theory of motivation, has clearly mentioned the importance of supervision for work performance and productivity¹⁵. Supervisors enhance favorable work attitudes. In a significant study of government employees, most employees indicated that supervisors were technically competent, but gave them less satisfactory marks for administrative skills and even lower ones for interpersonal skills¹⁶.

For the analysis of human resource accountability through supervision, a survey of the public sector organization through questionnaire was conducted. For the survey the Civil Secretariat, Government of Balochistan was selected. Owing to its important strategic position in the government of Balochistan, the employees of the Civil Secretariat are more organized and under close supervision. The employees of lower grades i.e. grade 5 to 15 were selected for the survey. The reason for the selection of lower grade employees was that they are directly affected by the method of supervision. A pre-tested questionnaire in Urdu was distributed among the employees of Balochistan Civil Secretariat. The convenient sampling method was adopted.

The data collected through questionnaires was analyzed and presented in the tabular form below.

• Total number of questionnaires distributed;	90
• Number of questionnaires received;	63
• Percentage of questionnaires received;	70%
• Percentage of questionnaires not received;	30%

The grade wise delivery and receipt of questionnaires is shown in the following table.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 214-215.

¹¹ C.H. Wyndham and H.M. Cooke, "The Influence of Quality of Supervision On the Production of Men Engaged in Moderating Hard Physical Work", New York: Ergonomics, Volume. 7, No.2, April, 1964, pp. 139- 150.

¹² George t. Milkovich and John W. Boudreau, "Personnel; Human Resource Management, A Diagnostic Approach", Delhi: Richard D. Irwin, Inc, 1998, p. 178.

¹³ Dachler H. Peter and Bernhard Wilpert, "Conceptual Dimensions and Boundaries of participation in Organizations; a Critical Evaluation", New York: Administrative Science Quarterly, March, 1978, pp.1-39.

¹⁴ Feldman Daniel C. and Arnold Hugh J. "Managing Individual and Group Behavior in Organization", New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983, p. 15.

¹⁵ Frederick Hertzberg , Bernard Mausner & Barbra B. Synderman, " The Motivation to Work", New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959,

¹⁶ A. L. Siegal, Employee Attitude Survey Reveals Some Clear Messages for Mangers and Supervisors", Management, spring 1980, pp. 13-15.

Table 1

Employees' grade	Number of questionnaires delivered	%age	No. of questionnaires received	%age	No. of questionnaires not received	%age
Grade 5	21	23.33	14	22.22	7	25.93
Grade 7	16	17.78	6	9.52	10	37.04
Grade 9	6	6.67	3	4.76	3	11.11
Grade 11	15	16.67	10	15.87	5	18.52
Grade 12	22	24.44	20	31.75	2	7.41
Grade 15	10	11.11	10	15.85	-	-
Total	90	100.00	63	100.00	27	100.00

The employees were asked as if they feel accountable to their supervisors for their work performance; their responses are given in the table below.

Table 2

Employees' grades	Yes	%age	No	%age	NR*	%age	Total
Grade 5	14	19.04	2	3.18	-	-	14
Grade 7	6	9.52	-	-	-	-	6
Grade 9	3	4.76	-	-	-	-	3
Grade 11	9	14.29	1	-	-	-	10
Grade 12	19	30.16	-	-	1	1.59	20
Grade 15	10	-	-	-	-	-	10
Total	61	-	1	-	1	-	63
%age total	-	93.14	-	4.77	-	1.59	100

* No Response.

Almost 93% employees say that they are accountable to their supervisors for their work performance. In response to question that to what extent supervision increase accountability of their work performance. Their response is given in the following table.

Table 3

Employees' grades	To great extent		To some extent		Not at all		NR		Total
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	
Grade 5	8	12.70	6	9.52	-	-	-	-	14
Grade 7	4	6.34	2	3.17	-	-	-	-	6
Grade 9	3	4.76	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Grade 11	5	7.94	3	4.76	1	1.59	1	1.59	10
Grade 12	12	19.05	7	11.11	-	-	1	1.59	20
Grade 15	9	14.29	1	1.59	-	-	-	-	10
Total	41		19		1		2		63
%age total	65.08		30.16		1.59		3.18		100

The table above reveals that 65% of employees say that supervision increase the accountability of their work performance to great extent while 30% of them say that it increase accountability to only some extent.

Supervision accountability also helps workers to share their work related problems with their supervisors. When the employees were asked to assign importance to the supervisory help for the solution of their work related problems, their response in this regard is summarized in the table below.

Table 4

Employees' grades	Extremely important		Very important		Important		Not Important		NR		Total
	No	%age	No	%age	No	%age	No	%age	No	%age	
Grade 5	11	17.46	3	4.76	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Grade 7	2	3.17	2	3.17	2	3.17	-	-	-	-	6
Grade 9	2	3.17	1	1.59	-	--	-	-	-	-	3
Grade 11	2	3.17	4	6.35	4	6.35	-	-	-	-	10
Grade 12	8	12.70	4	6.35	7	11.11	-	-	1	1.59	20
Grade 15	5	7.94	5	7.94	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Total	30		19		13		-		1		63
%age total	47.61		30.16		20.63		-		1.59		100

The table above shows that almost 48% of employees say that supervisory help for the solution of work related problems are extremely important, while 30% and 21% of them say respectively that it is very important and important.

To an open question when the respondents were asked to mention some other aspects of work environment, which can have positive impact on their work performance, they mentioned the following aspects.

Table 5

Employees' grades	No of employees responded	No of employees not responded	Other aspects of work environment mentioned
Grade 5	7	7	Respect and dignity, moral support, reward for better performance, encouragement, friendly work environment, better understanding, and recognition of good performance.
Grade 7	1	5	Establishment of punishment and reward system
Grade 9	1	2	Regular consultation with workers.
Grade 11	2	8	Tangible rewards for good performance, proper checks and balances.
Grade 12	5	15	Better working relationship, fixation of responsibility for work, recognition of good work, respect for workers, understanding.
Grade 15	4	6	Proper work planning, greater independence, fixation of responsibility, daily inspection.
Total	19	43	

Results and Discussion

The result of the survey reveals that almost all employees feel accountability of their work performance through their supervisors. They also feel that supervision increase their work performance accountability to great extent. The most important element to which the majority of employees assign extreme importance is the supervisory role to help employees solve their work related problems. The distribution of responses is skewed towards extreme importance in this aspect of supervision. To an open question to mention some other aspects of work environment that can positively reinforce their performance, their grade wise responses vary and majority of them have mentioned the reward system for better performance.

Conclusion

Supervision is one of the most important aspects of public sector management. Through supervision, the authorities can increase the workers accountability and thereby ensure the optimum utilization of workforce energies for better performance. Organizations may have potentially rich human resources but showing poor performance because people do not work unless they are made to work. Supervision plays important role particularly in the public sector organizations where individuals are part of a large system. Public sector employees have quite secure jobs and they are mostly promoted on the basis of seniority and length of experience, which do not serve to motivate them to utilize their full potential to accomplish organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. Supervision is highly useful to achieve this objective of making employees accountable for their performance. Supervisors coordinate the efforts of operational employees, who look to them for leadership and direction. Successful supervisors combine technical knowledge with an understanding of human behaviour to attain organization objectives and at the same time satisfy employees' job-related concerns. Lack of proper supervision results into, good employees but bad practices and efficiency seriously suffers. The public sector organizations in Balochistan are under immense pressure to improve their performance and there is an urgent need to pay special attention to the supervisory aspect of management.

Recommendations:

- Before accountability, HR must be told to help employees in understanding the employee book and keep updating employees all the time
- Information literacy is must among public sector employees. This helps in reasonable supervision and results can be according to expectations.
- Employees considered as social entity, guide employees about emotional stability, emotional intelligence. This training will make employees respond in proper manner which will ensure good supervision in many areas. This will also improve the productivity of public sector organization
- Supervision in Public sector must be facilitative, cordial atmosphere and supportive to make sure the social and positive role of HR.
- Clearly detailed and updated on legal orientations
- Training to make employees information literate for central ERP systems and legal orientations.

References

- Stephen E. Catt & Donald S. Miller, "Supervision; Working with People", 2nd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1991. p.7.
- Leslie W. Rue, Lloyed L. Byars, "Supervision; Key Link to Productivity", 3rd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1990. p.6.
- Jack J. Phillips, "Improving Supervisors' Effectiveness", California: Jossey-Base, Inc. Publishers, 1985, p. 5.
- Stephen E. Catt & Donald S. Miller, "Supervision; Working with People", 2nd Edition, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1991. p.13.
- Judith G. Balin, "Supervision; Skills for Managing Work and Leading People", New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995, p 2.
- Leon C. Megginson, "Personnel; A Behavioral Approach to Administration", Georgetown: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1967, p. 214.
- C.H. Wyndham and H.M. Cooke, "The Influence of Quality of Supervision On the Production of Men Engaged in Moderating Hard Physical Work", New York: Ergonomics, Volume. 7, No.2, April, 1964, pp. 139- 150.
- Dachler H. Peter and Bernhard Wilpert, "Conceptual Dimensions and Boundaries of participation in Organizations; a Critical Evaluation", New York: Administrative Science Quarterly, March, 1978, pp.1-39.
- Feldman Daniel C. and Arnold Hugh J. "Managing Individual and Group Behavior in Organization", New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983, p. 15.
- Frederick Hertzberg , Bernard Mausner & Barbra B. Synderman, " The Motivation to Work", New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959,
- L. Siegal, Employee Attitude Survey Reveals Some Clear Messages for Mangers and Supervisors", Management, spring 1980, pp. 13-15.