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Practices and Challenges of Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) in the Ethiopian Public Sector: The Case of Selected Grad I Town Administrations in Oromia Regional State

Bersissa Kacho[1] **Libanos Semere Haile**[2]

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to assess the practices and challenges of job evaluation and grading in grade one city administrations of Oromia Regional State. Descriptive research design and mixed research approach were used. Both probability and non-probability techniques were used. Random sampling technique was used to select ten cities from the 19 grade one city administrations in the region. Hence, using proportional random sampling technique, 1000 civil servants were taken for this study. Questionnaire, focus group discussions and key informant interview were the methods used for data collection. Whereas descriptive statistics has been used to analyse quantitative data, thematization and narration method were utilized for qualitative data. The findings revealed that while the level of transparency during employees' placement was moderate, the level of accountability and employees' participation was low. Moreover, some city administrations not only compromised merit principles but they also failed to get committed to apply the principle of placing the right person at the right position. Employees not only lacked confidence with the employees' placement committee but they also were desperate about their future career development Other challenges reported included payment related problems, interferences from the top, unfair composition of employee placement committee as well as criteria used. The researchers concluded that there were both success and failure story recorded during the implementation of the program. The study recommended that before any reform implementation the concerned body must improve knowledge and awareness level of its stakeholders. It was also recommended that public sectors and other stakeholders should be committed and responsible to manage any implementation of reform initiatives without politically motivated behaviour.

Keywords: Job evaluation and grading, Oromia region, grade one cities

1. Introduction

The aim of human resources management is linking employees with their work results which should be met in order for an organization to fulfill its tasks. Job evaluation is crucial in human resource management as it aims to ensure equitable remuneration for relative worth of a job. The principle upon which all job evaluation schemes are based is that of describing and assessing the value of all jobs in the organizations in terms of a number of factors, the relative importance of

[1] PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Management, College of Finance, Management and Development, Ethiopian Civil Service University, email: fenetwada@gmail.com

[2] PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Management, College of Finance, Management and Development, Ethiopian Civil Service University, email: semerelibanos93@gmail.com

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which varies from job to job (ILO, 2014). In this regard, the Civil Service Commission of Ethiopia has been coordinating human resource service improvement programs in both federal and state agencies. The Commission, under its power bestowed by proclamation number 916/2008, guides the preparation of job descriptions and approves the different job levels with their respective points of weight. The latest of such deeds is the Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) enacted in 2016 with details of employee placement procedures. The JEG reform targets to equate salary and benefits of similar positions and job grades in different institutions because it was discovered that different civil service institutions have varied salary scales for similar jobs. These varied salaries and benefits increased the public servant turn-over as employees leave one and join another for a better employment. This was believed to be biased and unfair. Hence, equitable salary and benefits proportional to job weight, irrespective of institutions, is planned to be put in to effect. However, as preliminary information indicates placement of workers in the new levels has not been an easy task. Some of the challenges seem to have emanated from the criteria of placement itself (Desalegn, 2017). As indicated in the legal document (proclamation number 916/2008), placement is determined by 70 percent performance score, 10 percent readiness to implement governmental policies and strategies, 10 percent profile, and 10 percent experience of service on higher positions. However, these measurement tools are hardly objective leading to biases.

Similarly, civil Service institutions and their respective JEG committees, included in the reform process were observed facing multi-dimensional problems when they started the placement of employees into the new levels (Desalegn, 2017). For instance, in the JEG, all positions in all government institutions demand a Bachelor degree for the highest level. Moreover, expert positions demand few years of experience to reach the highest level. No matter how long an expert has worked in a position, it does not matter to the acquisition of a certain level. What matters most is one's performance record for the first six months that is taken for measurement. Hence, it disregards invaluable knowledge that can be accumulated only through job experience. As JEG implementation is a recent issue, there is shortage of empirical study in the area. Hence, the findings of this study could be used as an input for the civil service commission, regional civil service bureaus and offices and city administrations to rectify the gaps and realize successful implementation of the program. Moreover, it could provide baseline information for decision makers at different levels to devise appropriate strategies and practices to effectively implement the reform program. Furthermore, the finding of the study could initiate interest and assist as a stepping-stone for further study in the area. Hence, it is paramount to assess practices and challenges of job evaluation and grading implementation. In this connection, this article aims to assess the practices and challenges of Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) in grade I City Administration of Oromia Regional State. Main sections of the research include brief review of related literature, research methods and tools, findings and discussion of the result, as well as conclusion and possible recommendations.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Concepts and Methods of Job Evaluation and Grading

Human resource management is an important area in an organization yet is very complex due to the fact that it involves human beings who are intelligent to think, react and act according to their thoughts (Masanja, 2019). According to Masanja (2019) managing human beings requires skills and expertise so they can fulfil their jobs. In order for employees to fulfil their job efficiently and effectively, job evaluation is an important human resource practices.

Job evaluation is a method of comparing different jobs to ensure that civil servants are graded fairly and equitably when considering each job in relation to others in the organisation and equally with other staff undertaking similar jobs or jobs of equal value (EESA, 2021). Basically, this indicates three things: Firstly, only the job is evaluated, not the person doing the job. Secondly, it is a process that seeks to measure objectively the different elements of a job. Thirdly, the jobs are placed in a rank order according to their size thereby, producing a hierarchy of jobs/grades. Similarly, scholars such as Armstrong (2006) and Dessler (2005) defined job evaluation as a process whereby jobs are placed in a rank order according to overall demands placed upon the job holder. It therefore provides a basis for a fair and orderly grading structure. It is important to note that this is a ranking of jobs, not people. Hence, job evaluation assumes normal job performance by a typical worker and in effect, the process ignores individual abilities or performance (Stephen & David, 2010).

The heart of job evaluation is determining appropriate criteria to arrive at the ranking. It is easy to say that jobs are valued and ranked by their relative job worth, but ambiguity increases when attempt is made to state what places one job higher than another in the job structure hierarchy (Stephen & David, 2010). According to the scholars most job-evaluation plans use responsibility, skill, effort, and working conditions as major criteria, but each of these, in turn, can be broken down into more specific terms. There are a number of different job evaluation methods, each with advantages and disadvantages but there are only two types of scheme, analytical and non-analytical (Armstrong, 2006).

Job ranking is a non-analytical methods which uses job descriptions or job titles. Each job is considered as a whole and placed in a felt fair rank order to produce a league table. It is considered the simplest method since there is no attempt to break down or analyse the whole job in any way. *Paired comparison* is also a relatively simple technique. Each job is compared as a whole with each other job in turn, and points are awarded according to whether its overall importance is judged to be less than, equal to, or more than the other jobs. Points awarded for each job are then totalled and a rank order produced. Though, it is slightly more systematic, like job ranking; it does not involve any analysis of jobs nor indicate the extent of difference between them. In *job classification method*, the number of grades is decided first and detailed grade definitions produced. Representative (benchmark) jobs are evaluated to validate the definitions. Other non-benchmark jobs are then slotted on the basis of the relevant grade definitions. This method may be used where groups of jobs can be clearly defined - for example, clerical and administrative employees.

A point rating is a commonly used analytical method of job evaluation technique which breaks down each job into a number of factors; for example, skill, responsibility and effort, with the factors sometimes being further broken down into sub-factors, for example, education, decision making and dexterity. These sub-factors will be further divided into degrees or levels. Points are awarded for each factor according to a predetermined scale and the total points decide a job's place in the ranking order. The factors should reflect the varying degrees of importance attached to them. The Ethiopian Civil Service Commission has used point ranking method in the current job evaluation and grading (JEG) program (Desalegn, 2017).

To sum up, a prime consideration in deciding which analytical job evaluation scheme to select lies in the choice of factors and weightings. The benefit of proprietary 'off the peg' schemes is that they normally have been well tried and tested and there is therefore a saving in time. The benefit of 'tailor made' schemes is that the factors and definitions more accurately reflect the

range of jobs to be evaluated and are arrived at through consensus; consequently they are more likely to be acceptable to the workforce (Armstrong, 2006)

2.2. Employee Placement

Employee placement is the process of assigning a new employee to a position within his or her sphere of authority where the employee will have a reasonable chance for success (Dessler, 2008). Kumar and Sharma (2001) define placement as the determination of the job to which an accepted candidate is to be assigned. Employee performance in any organization is reflected in the effectiveness and efficiency with which goals and objectives are achieved (Sousa, Aspinwall, Sampaio and Rodrigues, 2005).

Employee placement is the final stage after job evaluation and grading. It adjusts someone to the right job (Mathis & Jackson, 2004 cited in Sari 2019). Placement is a very important problem in the function of human resource management because it is also related to costs; for example, with appropriate placement it will directly affect the costs of operations and training. The concept of Person-Job Fit proposed by (Mathis & Jackson, 2004 cited in Sari 2019) states that there are three things that must be met in accordance with the characteristics of the work, namely Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA). Correct placement is in no way less important than accurate selection. Even a competent employee may be inefficient and dissatisfied if put on a wrong job. A misplaced employee is a dissatisfied and frustrated man. Lack of interest in the job will be reflected in lower productivity (Kangal, 2019). The following are the most important principles followed while making placement of an employee (Rina, 2021).

1) Job requirement: Man should be placed on the job according to the requirement of the job rather than qualification and requirement of the man.
2) Qualification: The job offered should match with the qualification possessed by an employee.
3) Information: All the information relating to the job should be given to the employees along with the prevailing working conditions. They should also be made known that they have to pay penalty for wrong doing.
4) Loyalty and Co-operation: Every effort should be made to develop a sense of loyalty and co-operation in employees to make them understand their responsibilities (Rina, 2021)

2.3. Practices of Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie (1917-1974) is historically mentioned to have laid the foundation for modern civil service in the country when he took over the creation of modern public administration and started a series of restructuring measures to centralize his administration and modernize the country. The need to have an efficient administration system was recognized as modernization progressed in the country in the early 1960's. In particular, the imperial regime appears to have felt the necessity of having a modern civil service sector that can serve as chief instrument for promoting economic and social development (Paulos, 2001). Such efforts were geared mainly towards the realization of an effective and efficient civil service governed by specified rules and procedures of a uniform nature (Atkilt, 2007). Moreover, the establishment of the Ethiopian Central Personnel Agency (CPA), now known as Ethiopian Civil Service Commission, was a historical milestone in the development of modern civil service administration in the country. The agency was established with primary objective of maintaining efficient, effective and permanent civil service that functions based on a

merit system. The agency was also mandated with the obligation of creating a homogenous civil service governed by uniform rules and principles, recruitment of civil servants and appointment up to the rank of assistant minister. Additionally, it was given the supremacy to select government employees on the basis of open competitive examination and use position classification system for grading jobs and salary structure (Atkilt, 2007).

Starting from 1964 E.C, the Ethiopian government followed position classification job evaluation system for grading jobs and to estimate salary. Nevertheless, gradually the Ethiopian Civil Service Minister took the initiative to change this job evaluation method based on the finding from researches conducted on the existing gaps of the previously used job evaluation method that have been implementation for decades in the country. The Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) was enacted in 2016 with details of employee placement procedures. The JEG levels go up to 22 unlike the former that had only nine. The JEG reform targets to equate salary and benefits of similar positions and job grades in different institutions because it was discovered that different institutions have varied salary scales for similar jobs. Hence, equitable salary and benefits proportional to job weight, irrespective of institutions, is planned to be put in effect (Desalegn, 2017).

After completion of job evaluation and grading system, the Ethiopian civil service commission embarked on passing rules and regulations of JEG implementation by all public sectors. As a result, all sectors have started implementing job evaluation and grading system Implementation, i.e. assignment of employees based on the revised job grades and salary scale. After the implementation of pilot test at some selected institutions, Oromia Public Service and Human Resource embarked large scale implementation of the program. Empirical studies on the status of job evaluation and grading in Ethiopia in general and in Oromia Regional State in particular is scant.

3. Methods

The purpose of this research was to assess the practices and challenges of job evaluation and grading implementation in10 selected grad I Town Administration in Oromia Regional State. Hence, descriptive research design has been employed as it helps to describe what has happened and what is happening on the issues related to the research problem (Kothari, 2004). Besides concurrent triangulation research approach which combines both quantitative and qualitative data was employed (Best & Khan, 1998).

This study has focused on grade one cities in the Oromia Regional State. Hence, the target population of this study was the 19 such cities in the region. From this number, 10 cities were randomly selected. Hence, the sample frame of the study was the list of all active civil servants of the 10 grad one cities. Besides, Oromia Civil Service Bureaus and JEG Committees at the regional and institutional levels were also among the target population. Regarding the sample size most scholars (Chang, H. J., K. Huang, & C. Wu., 2006) argue that under heterogeneous population type, 30% of the population could be a good representative. But, in this study, because homogenous population is expected, 5% sample size was considered. Hence, the sample size of this study was 1000 civil servants as indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Population and sample size

S.no	Name of Grad one cities	Size of the civil Servants	S.no	Name of Grad one cities	Size of the civil Servants
1	Adama	4129	6	Ambo	1379
2	Bishoftu	2246	7	Dukam	1283
3	Shashamanne	2047	8	Waliso	1651
4	Jimma	2319	9	Sululta	1998
5	Burayyu	1904	10	Robe	1141
Total population and sample size					**20097**
Sample size: 5%*20097 =1000					

Questionnaire, focus group discussions and key informant interview were the methods used for data collection. Whereas descriptive statistics has been used to analyse quantitative data, thematization and narration method were utilized for qualitative data. Besides, all requisite information obtained through such instruments were described, analysed, synthesized and narrated. All the necessary ethical considerations were taken during the data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Response Rate

A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed to employees and 960 (96%) of the questionnaire were obtained valid and used for analysis as indicate in the following table. The study was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. According to Zaidaton & Bagheri (2009) as cited by Abraham, Assegid, & Assefa, (2014), the mean score below 3.39 was considered as low, the mean score from 3.40 up to 3.79 was considered as moderate and mean score above 3.8 was considers. Hence, this method of interpretation was used for the descriptive statistics.

Table 4.1: Sample Grade I Cities of the Study

	Frequency	Percentage
Burayu	106	11
Sululta	97	10.1
Robe	92	9.6
Jima	93	9.7
Shashamene	89	9.3
Woliso	96	10
Bishoftu	89	9.3
Ambo	101	10.5
Dukem	89	9.3
Adama	108	11.3
Total	**960**	**100.0**

4.2 Back ground of the Respondents

In this section, demographic profiles of the respondents are presented. These profiles include gender, age, levels of educational achieved, and years of service in the organization. Descriptive statistics are used to describe these background characteristics of the respondents.

As depicted in table 4.2, whereas 51.8% of the respondents were males, the remaining 47.8% of them was females. This indicates that data for this study was collected from nearly equal proportion of male and female categories of the population with no gender bias. Table 4.2 also depicts that nearly half of the respondents (44.6%) were aged between 31-40 years, while 25.8% and 24.2% of them were found in the age categories of 18-30 and 41-50 years respectively. Only 5.4% of the respondents were within age category of 51-60 years. This result indicated that majority of the respondents were found in the active age group. As a result if employees' job evaluation and grading system is properly conducted and implemented by the city administrations, they could significantly benefit from this active age group of its workers.

Table 4.2: Gender, Age, Marital status and Educational level of the Respondents

S.No	Items		Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	497	51.8
		Female	459	47.8
2	Age in years	18-30	248	25.8
		31-40	428	44.6
		41-50	232	24.2
		51-60	52	5.4
3	Marital Status	Married	739	77
		Never married	145	15.1
		Divorced	46	4.8
		Widowed	30	3.1
4	Educational level	Grad 12 and below	12	1.3
		Certificate and diploma	74	7.7
		BA/BSC	712	74.2
		MA/MSC	154	16
		PhD	8	0.8

Source: Field survey 2021

Regarding to marital status of the respondents, as depicted in the table 4.2; though absolute majority of the respondents (77%) were married; the data was collected from the respondents having different marital status. Regarding educational level of the respondents, absolute majority of them (90%) have master's degree and above. This indicates that lack of proper design and implementation of JEG system could easily create dissatisfaction among employees as the awareness level of the employees is high as a result of their high education level.

As can be seen from Table 4.3, whereas 77.7% of the respondents' job position is expert, the remaining 22.3% of them were found on different management position. As clearly indicated in Table 4.3, respondents from 11-22 job grades were included in the study. This shows that opinion of employees who were found on different job grade were included in this study which was paramount to assess the general impression of the practices and challenges of JEG implementation. Moreover, as indicated in the above table respondents from different work

experience were included in the study. The respondents were also represented from different sectors such as health, education, labour and social affairs, finance and economy, and civil service.

Table 4.3: Job position, Job grade, Work experience and Job sector of the Respondents

S.No	Items		Frequency	Percentage
1	Job position	Expert	746	77.7
		Management	214	22.3
2	Job grade	1-5	18	1.9
		6-10	60	6.3
		11-16	476	49.6
		17-22	406	42.3
3	Work experience	1-5	102	10.6
		6-10	206	21.5
		11-15	230	24
		16-20	204	21.3
		21 and above	218	22.7
4	Job sector of the respondents	Education	210	21.9
		Health	196	20.4
		Labour and social affairs	164	17.1
		Finance and Economic	156	16.3
		Civil Service	234	24.4

Source: Field survey 2021

4.3 Assessment on the Practices of Implementing JEG System

The first aspect considered under this section was whether or not employees' placement was implemented on a transparent manner. Accordingly, while majority of the respondents (62%) have showed their agreement on the issue; 24% of them responded that employees' placement was not implemented on a transparent manner. The mean value of 3.4 also indicates that the level of transparency during employees' placement was moderate. The result from the discussion with employees also revealed the same that enable to conclude the satisfaction level of employees is moderate.

As presented in Table 4.4, the result with regard to the level of accountability during the implementation of JEG system shows that majority of the respondents (57%) agreed that JEG implementation was carried out in an accountable manner while 25% of them did not agree on the issue. The mean value of 3.4 indicates that the level of accountability during the implementation of the JEG system was moderate. In the discussion made it is believed that the level of accountability was poor in situations where wrong deeds were observed during placement of employees. Rather, there is tendency of refusing the decision of those concerned in the upper administrative echelon to revise faulty placement that made employees to complaint. The findings show that there is no as such strong commitment on the part of those concerned to make the responsible body accountable for the deviations from the guideline.

Table 4.4: Employees' Response on the Practices of JEG Implementation

Question Items	SD	DA	N/A	AG	SA	Mean	SD
Employees placement was implemented on a transparent manner	8	16	14	45	17	3.4	1.2
Employees placement was done in an accountable manner	7	18	19	38	19	3.4	1.1
Employee placement was participative	9	17	20	37	17	3.3	1.2
Employees placement was implemented based on a merit principle	10	21	26	29	18	3.2	1.1
Employee placement was carried out based on objective criteria and the principle that the right person should be assigned on the right place	11	20	17	38	15	3.2	1.1
Higher officials of the institution (complaint committee) was giving quick response and follow up to employees complaints on their job evaluation and placement	13	23	20	12	33	3.1	1.2
	Overall mean					3.27	

Source: Field survey 2021

As indicated in the same table above, nearly half of the respondents (54%) agreed that employee placement was participative. The remaining 26% and 20% of the respondents disagreed and neither agreed nor disagreed to the issue respectively. The mean value of ''3.3'' indicates that the level of employees participation during placement was low. Focus group discussion participants also indicated that less emphasis was given on the part of those concerned to orient employees about the overall objective of JEG system in general and issues related to placement of employees in specific. Therefore, it is possible to say that JEG implementation failed to make employees to have adequate awareness about JEG system that led to low employee participation.
Another very important aspects of the practices considered in this study was whether or not employees placement was implemented based on a merit principle. As depicted in Table 4.4 above, whereas significant number of the respondents (47%) agreed to the issue, 31% and 26% of them did not agree and neither agree nor disagree respectively. The mean value of 3.2 indicates that employees' placement was not merit based. The same result is also there on the part of focus group discussion participants. Therefore, it can be said that there are sectors that compromise merit principle during employee placement that is against the objective of JEG aiming to assign the right person at the right position.

As presented in Table 4.4, nearly half of the respondents (53%) agreed that employee placement was based on objective criteria. But, significant number (31%) of the respondents replied that employee placement was not based on objective criteria as well as not based on the principle that the right person be assigned on the right position. Its mean value of 3.2 is in the low category. This implies that the effort made by the sampled institutions to assign employees in such a way that the right person be placed on the right position was low which was supported by participants of focus group discussion. This leads to conclude that sample public sectors were not equally committed to apply the placement of the right person at the right position.

Another important aspects and practices of JEG implementation addressed in this research was whether higher officials of the institution and/ or complaint committee was giving quick response and follow up to employees complaints related their job evaluation and placement. As

depicted in the Table 4.4, though large number of the respondents (45%) agreed with the issue, significant number of them (36%) of them disagreed with the idea that higher officials of the institution and/ or complaint committee was giving quick response and follow up to complaints related to their job evaluation and placement. The mean value result of 3.1 indicates that it is categorized as low. The overall mean of "3.27" indicated that the practice of JEG implementation was rated low by the respondents. The discussion made with employees also confirms the same. This implies that neither higher official of the institution nor the complaint committee was responsive and gave follow up to complaints coming from some of the employees.

4.4 Perception of Employees on JEG System

As indicated in Table 4.5 below, one of issues assessed in this study was whether or not employees' placement implemented so far allowed the right person to be assigned on the right place. Accordingly, whereas 46% of the respondents agreed, 36% of them did not agree. The mean value is 3.1. It is found in the low category. The discussion made also revealed that the objective of assigning the right person at the right position is failed as a result of frequent revision of the requirement for educational qualification and negligence of some employee placement committees. This implies that respondents did not have the perception that the JEG system implemented so far in their respective institutions have allowed the right person to be assigned on the right place.

The respondents were also asked to give their perception on whether or not the number of criteria used (education, experience, performance evaluation, etc.) for employees' placements are sufficient. As depicted in table 4.5 above, while 53% of

The respondents have the perception that the number of criteria used were sufficient; 32% of them did not believe on this issue. The mean value of 3.3 indicates that it is low. The participants of focus group discussion had no problem with the criteria except their concern about their genuine implementation and frequent revision of educational qualification requirements that seem tailor made to the existing employees. This implies that though some respondents had an interest to have more number of criteria to carry out the JEG implementation system their concern was more on fair implementation of the criteria. Moreover, respondents were also asked to give their opinion the reasonableness of the weight given to each of the criteria used to for employee evaluation. Accordingly, the mean value (3.1) of the respondents' response indicates low. From this, one can imply that not only the criteria used were not sufficient but also the weight given to each of the criteria was not reasonable.

In this study, it was also attempted to see perception of the respondents on whether or not during JEG implementation (employee placement) encouraged disabilities and women who fulfilled the minimum skill requirements. Accordingly, whereas 65% of the respondents agreed with the issue; only 19% of them did not agree. The mean value is 3.5 which indicate that it is categorized under moderate level. This is among the points strongly appreciated and also agreed of its implementation. This implies that good effort has been shown by the sampled institutions to encourage disabilities and women who fulfilled the minimum skill requirement during employee placement.

Table 4.5: Perception of Employees on JEG system

Question Items	SD	DA	Neither Nor	AG	SA	Mean	SD
Employees placement allowed right person to be assigned on the right place	11	25	18	36	10	3.1	1.2
The number of criteria used (education, experience, performance, etc) for employees placement are sufficient	10	22	15	38	15	3.3	1.2
The ratio/weight given to each criteria is reasonable	11	22	23	33	12	3.1	1.1
Employees placement encouraged disabilities and women who fulfilled the minimum skill requirements	5	14	16	25	40	3.5	1.0
JEG implementation allowed me to utilize my skills, knowledge and abilities	10	21	20	34	15	3.4	1.2
I am satisfied with the way my performance is measured	9	38	15	23	15	3.0	1.1
I am satisfied with the work of employees placement committee in my institution	18	24	13	34	11	3.0	1.1
Complaint hearing committee was responsive to employees questions after announcement of their placement	17	33	8	30	12	3.0	1.2
I am satisfied with the availability of career development opportunity in my current position	16	24	16	32	12	3.0	1.2
The criteria used were objective enough to evaluate and place the right person on the right place	19	22	22	23	15	2.9	1.1
Over all, I am satisfied and have good perception on how JEG has been implemented and managed in my institution	19	28	10	31	11	3.0	1.1

Source: Field survey 2021

One of the aims of job evaluation and grading is to allow employees to utilize their skills, knowledge and abilities. Respondents' perception has indicated that whereas 49% of them agreed that JEG implementation has allowed them to use their skills and knowledge; 31% of the respondents did not agree with the issue. Even significant numbers (20%) of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the issue. The mean value of 3.4 indicates that the level at which JEG implementation allowed employees to use their skill, knowledge and abilities is moderate. The result from discussion made also shows the dissatisfaction of employees about their performance after their new assignment.

In this study, it was also assessed whether or not employees were satisfied with the work of employees' placement committee of their respective institution. As depicted in Table 4.5,

whereas 45% of the respondents agreed, 42% of them did not satisfy with the work of employees' placement committee. The mean value of the respondents (3.0) is also found in low category. Focus group discussion participants were also less confident with employee placement committee on their understanding of the placement guideline and their readiness to shoulder such type of eye catching responsibility. One of the evidence of their dissatisfaction was indicated by the fact that 47% of the respondents replied that they were not satisfied with the way their performance was measured by the committee. Only 38% of the respondents reported they were satisfied with work of the committee. The mean value result was also categorized as low (3.0). Dissatisfaction with the committee was represented by the fact that whereas 50% of the respondents reported that complaint hearing committee was not responsive to employees' questions; only 42% of the respondents agreed that the committee was responsive. The mean value of the respondents (3.0) was also found in the low category. This implies that the responsiveness of the complaint committee to the questions of some employees after placement was low.

The other aim of JEG implementation was to create better career development opportunity to employees. In this regard, as depicted in Table 4.5, attempt was made to assess perception of the respondents whether they were satisfied with the availed career development opportunity in their current position. Accordingly, while 45% of the respondents agreed, 40% of them did not agree. The mean value of the respondents (3.0) indicates low. The discussion result also show that the career development is applied only in health, education sectors and research institutes for teachers, health officers, researchers and consultants. This implies employees in most of the public sectors were not hopeful about their career development that make them stable and feel promising future in their organization.

It was also stipulated in the legal document of JEG that the criteria to be used should objective enough to evaluate and place the right person on the right place. As depicted in table 4.5 above, whereas 41% of the respondents disagreed that the criteria used were objective; 38% of them agreed with the issue. The mean value of the respondents is 2.9. This indicates that some of the employees did not have the perception that the criteria used were objective. Discussion participants also perceive that the criteria were not objective in a way to differentiate the right person rather the criteria more specifically the educational qualification requirement gave room to misinterpretation that led in appropriate placement.

When we see the satisfaction level of the respondents with the overall implementation and management of the system in their institution, whereas 47% of the respondents did not satisfy, only 42% of them replied that they were satisfied. The discussants overall impression on the implementation and management of JEG system shows as they feel JEG system did not achieve the objectives for which it was introduced. This implies that as there is no improvement on employees' performance level and commitment after the implementation of JEG.

4.5 Challenges Faced During the Implementation of JEG

Total payment of the employee with salary increment of birr 2100.00 would have earned birr 75,600.00 which is a difference of birr 25,200.00. This shows the unfairness of splitting the duration of the payment that favour one and disfavour others in the total amount of money they earn within three years. In addition to this, participants raised that they were not paid nine (9) months of their salary increment while employees at federal public sectors were paid for the same that signify additional unfairness nature of the overall payment related issues. This implies the dissatisfaction of employees related to payment related issues that have negative impact on

their motivation and commitment by far affects the performance of their respective organizations.

Table 4.6: Employees Responses on the Challenges faced during the Implementation of JEG System

Question Items	SD	DA	N/A	AG	SA	Mean	SD
There was a problem of effecting payment related to JEG implementation as per the regulation of pay structure enacted by council of ministers	10	18	11	25	36	3.5	1.3
The duration set (one to three years) to effect payment following JEG implementation was not fair	11	14	18	27	30	3.5	1.3
There is politicians un necessary interference to spoil the procedures to be followed in the placement of employees	9	20	8	31	32	3.6	1.2
The re-evaluation and regarding of job positions exposed(source of problems) employees to be misplaced from their previously assigned position	6	20	22	33	20	3.4	1.1
The composition of employees placement committee members is biased toward management	7	22	23	28	19	3.4	1.2
The educational specialization required for some of the job positions were not clearly and systematically studied.	5	16	18	31	30	3.6	1.2
The educational specialization required for some positions were designed in a way it seems tailor made to the existing staff instead of linking the job positions to the required qualification	7	19	22	33	19	3.4	1.1
There was frequent revision of the requirement of educational specialization for some positions to allow employees to compete	9	20	13	39	18	3.1	1.1
The employees placement committee has no adequate capacity and understanding of the guideline	13	28	17	18	24	3.5	1.1
The 10% share given to head of the offices have significant consequence on assignment of the right person at the right position	6	20	22	36	15	3.4	1.1
The minimum service year set as criteria for placement of employees has discouraged those employees having long service years.	6	14	9	32	39	3.8	1.3

Source: Field survey 2021

Another aspects of the challenge addressed in this study was whether or not there was politicians unnecessary interference to spoil the procedures to be followed in the placement of employees. As can be seen from Table 4.6, whereas majority of the respondents agreed that there was politicians (higher level officials) unnecessary interference; significant numbers (29%) of them did not accept this idea. The mean value of 3.6 indicates that this issue was among the moderate challenges. The politicians' interference is among the big concerns for the participants of focus group discussions. They emphasized that they push placement committee members to assign their favourites in positions they prefer to be assigned. Sometimes minimum requirement is also compromised because of their interference using misinterpretation of the placement guideline as a way out. The opportunity the heads of office have to evaluate the performance of employees

out of ten (10%) for the purpose placement is another means of satisfying personal interest of heads. Therefore, it possible to say there are unnecessary interferences which spoiled the process of employee placement against the principle of assigning the right person at the right position.

As depicted in the same table, the re-evaluation and regarding of job positions exposed (became source of problems) some employees to be misplaced from their previously assigned position as reported by majority of the respondents (53%). Whereas 26% of the respondents did accept this idea, 22% of them were neutral on the issue. The mean value 3.4 indicates that the issue is a mong the moderate challenges. For the participants of focus group discussion, re-evaluation and regarding of some job position in different sectors were also taken as a challenge which displaced previously assigned employees because of new requirements that sometimes seem purposeful. For them, frequent revision of job positions are a result of inadequacy of relevant and detailed data about the job positions and lack of expertise in the area of job evaluation and grading. This implies that jobs are being evaluated and graded without necessary preparation and required knowledge and skill.

In this study it was also assessed what it the composition of employees placement committee. Accordingly, as depicted in Table 4.6, 47% of the respondents replied that the composition of employees' placement committee members was biased toward management. Besides, whereas 29% of the respondents did not agree with the issue; 23% of them neither agreed nor disagreed. The mean value of 3.4 indicates that the issue was a moderate challenge. As reported by significant number of the respondents (42%), the employees' placement committee has no adequate capacity and understanding related to JEG guidelines. Whereas 41% of the respondents did not agree the idea that the committee has no adequate capacity and understanding; 17% of them remain neutral about the issue. The mean value of 3.0 indicates that the challenge was categorized as low. Discussants also keep the position of questioning the capacity and understanding of employee committee members about the guideline. They attributed the complaint related to placement is a result of incompetency of the placement committee. In addition, heads of offices are unfairly allowed to assign more than 50% of placement committee members that give them an opportunity to represent individuals who are loyal for any manipulation. Therefore, it is possible to say the composition of placement committee is easy for manipulation since the majority of the members are assigned by head of offices.

Another issue addressed in this study was related to the 10% mark given to head of the office to evaluate an applicant. As reported by 51% of the respondents, the 10% privilege given to the heads of office significant negative consequence on the assignment of the right person on the right position. Whereas 26% of the respondents disagreed with the issue; 22% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the issue. The mean value of 3.4 indicates that this problem is categorized at a moderate level. Discussants also agreed that 10% evaluation given to office heads has negative consequence unless the evaluation criteria are objective and mutual agreement is important on the result of the evaluation. This shows that there is a tendency on the part of heads of offices to use this provision as a stick to punish and also opportunity to favour.

The finding (61%) also revealed that educational specialization required for some of the job positions were not clearly and systematically studied. Only, 21% of the respondents did not agree with the issue. The mean value (3.6) of the respondents also indicates that the issue was a moderate challenge. In a similar way, whereas majority of the respondents (52%) agreed that the educational specialization required for some positions were designed in a way it seems tailor made to the existing staff instead of linking the job positions to the required qualification; 26% of them disagreed with the issue. Significant number (22%) of the respondents were neither

agreed nor disagreed to the idea that education specialization was tailored to fit existing employees instead of linking it with the position. As can be interpreted from the 3.4 mean value (see Table 4.6), this issue was a moderate challenge. The discussion made with employees also revealed that they are not confident with the way educational qualifications were studied. The frequent revisions are a result of lack of expertise in the area. The qualifications are set just for the sake of complying with the existing human resources qualification instead of focusing on the real requirements of the job positions. The findings show that there is a gap on the way minimum educational requirements are studied.

Another similar challenges identified in this study was the frequent revision of the requirement of educational specialization for some positions to allow employees to compete as reported by 57% of the respondents. There were only 29% of the respondents who did not agree with the above issue. But, the 3.1 mean value of the respondents indicates this challenge was categorized as low.

Another interesting issue addressed in this was whether or not the minimum service year set as criteria for placement of employees has discouraged those employees having long service years. According to the majority of the respondents (71%), the minimum service year set was discouraged those employees having long service years. Only 20% of the respondents did not accept this idea. The mean value of 3.8 indicates that this issue was categorized as high. This is a very burning issue for discussants. The minimum service requirement is discouraging for those with long service years. It undermines the importance of experience to improve the level of performance. It also seems to ignore how experienced individuals are considered as asset to organization and also share their experience to new comers. Therefore, it is possible to say that low service years are encouraged as the expense of long service year which seems politically motivated to attract the attention of youth employees and show how they are important as compared to employees with long service years.

5. Conclusion

JEG implementation in Grade I City Administration of Oromia Regional State has recorded both success and failure stories. Specifically, the findings revealed that:

- Good effort has been shown by the sampled institutions to encourage disabilities and women who fulfilled the minimum skill requirement during employee placement.
- Good effort was made to keep confidentiality of employee placement information before the placement result was formally announced.
- There was a problem on the part of management to make responsible bodies accountable for their wrong deeds in implementing JEG programme such as on issues related employee assignment.
- Employees have different understanding on the purpose and mission of JEG because of their low participation in the process of implementation of the programme.
- The objective of JEG to assign the right person at the right position was violated in some city administration to the extent of compromising merit principle as a result of political interference and lack of commitment on the part responsible higher body.
- There were problems on the part of higher officials and placement committee to be responsive and gave proper follow up to complaints coming from some of the employees that caused grievance among some employees.
- There were also challenges such as timing and approach of payment related to employee placement, composition of placement committee, lack of adequate awareness of the

placement guideline, the way the minimum requirement of education and service years studied, un necessary interference of officials including the provision given to them 10% weight to evaluate employees for placement purpose.

In general, the initiative by itself as well as effort made to implement JEG system is encouraging. However, from the findings above it can be concluded that the system failed to fully achieve the assignment of the right person at the right position. This is partly a result of lack of commitment and unnecessary interference of officials, lack of adequate awareness of the JEG guideline and less emphasis given to employees' experience. Besides, it is also possible to conclude that implementation of JEG has not improved the career development in such a way that it will make employees stable and feel promising future in their organization.

6. Recommendation

This study aimed at assessing the practices and challenges of implementing job evaluation and grading system in the selected grade I City Administration in Oromia Regional State. Based on the findings and conclusions drawn the following recommendations are presented here under.
The overall findings show that the achievement of the overall implementation of JEG related as moderate as compared to the objectives for which the system is introduced and parameters set. As ways forward the following recommendations are presented as follows.

- The Federal Civil Service Commission and Regional Civil Service and Human Resource Development Bureaus should ensure in advance the maximum knowhow and commitment level of all stakeholders that will be involved in any reform implementation in addition to arranging performance-based reward and accountability system.
- All public sectors at administrative levels and other stakeholders should also be committed and also responsible to manage any implementation of reform initiatives without any politically motivated behaviour considering only what effective implementation of reform means to enhance service delivery and productivity of the public sectors.
- It is also important that Civil Service Commission and Oromia Region Civil Service and Human Resource Development Bureau to reconsider and deeply study the educational qualification requirement of job positions of different public sectors that caused dissatisfaction of employees for their frequent revisions and led to reducing the confidence of employees on the way educational qualification requirements are studied.
- It is also believed that the newly implemented JEG system is criticized for deemphasizing employees work experiences and seems to ignore the contribution of experiences to enhance performance. It reduces minimum requirement of the work experiences of different job positions to the level of more benefiting employees with low work experience. Therefore, it is advisable for Federal Civil Service Commission and Oromia Region Civil Service and Human Resource Development Bureau to revise and balance the minimum work experience requirements considering how work experiences correlate with performance.

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