Journal de Recherche Multidisciplinaire
ISSN : 3088-5205 https://jorep.net

JOREP Journal de recherche multidisciplinaire

Volume : 1
Numéro : 2
Année : 2025
Mois : Mars

IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' PERFORMANCE TO ENHANCE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA: TOWARD A CONCERTED LOCAL PERFORMANCE THEORY

Banaon Kouame Boniface [1]

Iradukunda Sengesho Benigne2

Nizeyimana Jean Baptiste3

1. Joint Reseacher at Lisala University and UNCR University, Department of Human Resources Management
2. Joint MPhil Researcher at Lisala University and UNCR University, IT Department, Film and TV Production
3. Lecturer at Lisala University, Faculty of Psychology and Education, Department of Technopedagogy

ABSTRACT

Improving the performance of local government officials is essential for enhancing local development outcomes in West Africa. Yet, the strategies for achieving performance improvement remain contested, and the relationship between improved performance and development outcomes is not well understood. This article evaluates the improvement of local government officials'

[1] Joint Reseacher at Lisala University and UNCR University, Development of projects management

performance and its impact on local development in West Africa through a comparative analysis of three theoretical frameworks: Capacity Building Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Performance Management Theory. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review, the research identifies the key strategies for performance improvement, including training, motivation, systems improvement, and accountability enhancement. The analysis reveals that while Capacity Building Theory emphasizes individual skills and knowledge, Organizational Learning Theory highlights collective learning and adaptation, and Performance Management Theory focuses on goal setting, monitoring, and feedback. The article proposes a new theoretical framework—Concerted Local Performance Theory—that integrates insights from all three theories and is adapted to the West African context. Concerted Local Performance Theory emphasizes collective, negotiated results that increase performance through collaboration among local government officials, citizens, civil society organizations, and central government.

Keywords: Performance improvement, local government, local development, West Africa, capacity building, organizational learning.

RÉSUMÉ

L'amélioration de la performance des agents des collectivités territoriales est essentielle pour renforcer les résultats du développement local en Afrique de l'Ouest. Pourtant, les stratégies pour réaliser l'amélioration de la performance restent contestées, et la relation entre l'amélioration de la performance et les résultats du développement n'est pas bien comprise. Cet article évalue l'amélioration de la performance des agents des collectivités territoriales et son impact sur le développement local en Afrique de l'Ouest à travers une analyse comparative de trois cadres théoriques : la théorie du renforcement des capacités, la théorie de l'apprentissage organisationnel et la théorie de la gestion de la performance. S'appuyant sur une revue de littérature exhaustive, la recherche identifie les stratégies clés pour l'amélioration de la performance, notamment la formation, la motivation, l'amélioration des systèmes et le renforcement de la responsabilité. L'analyse révèle que, tandis que la théorie du renforcement des capacités met l'accent sur les compétences et les connaissances individuelles, la théorie de l'apprentissage organisationnel souligne l'apprentissage collectif et l'adaptation, et la théorie de la gestion de la performance se concentre sur la fixation d'objectifs, le suivi et la rétroaction. L'article propose un nouveau cadre

théorique—la théorie de la Performance Locale Concertée—qui intègre les perspectives des trois théories et est adapté au contexte ouest-africain. La théorie de la Performance Locale Concertée met l'accent sur des résultats collectifs et concertés qui augmentent la performance par la collaboration entre les agents des collectivités territoriales, les citoyens, les organisations de la société civile et l'État central.

Mots-clés : Amélioration de la performance, collectivités territoriales, développement local, Afrique de l'Ouest, renforcement des capacités, apprentissage organisationnel.

Suumis le : 17 Mars , 2026
Publié le : 08 Jun , 2026
Auteurs correspondant: *Banaon Kouame Boniface,Iradukunda Sengesho Benigne and Nizeyimana Jean Baptiste*
Adresses électroniques: *banaonkouameboniface@cirep.ac.cd,benigneira0@gmail.com, nizeyimana.jb@dphu.ac.cd ,*
Ce travail est disponible sous la licence
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International

1. INTRODUCTION

Improving the performance of local government officials is essential for enhancing local development outcomes in West Africa. Yet, the strategies for achieving performance improvement remain contested, and the relationship between improved performance and development outcomes is not well understood. This article evaluates the improvement of local government officials' performance and its impact on local development in West Africa through a comparative analysis of three theoretical frameworks.

The article is organized as follows. Section two presents the three theoretical frameworks. Section three compares the frameworks and identifies key strategies for performance improvement. Section four proposes a new theoretical framework—Concerted Local Performance Theory—adapted to the West African context. Section five concludes.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Capacity Building Theory

Capacity Building Theory emphasizes the development of individual skills, knowledge, and abilities as the pathway to performance improvement. Key concepts include training, education, technical assistance, and professional development. Capacity building is seen as a prerequisite for effective performance, as officials cannot perform effectively without the necessary competencies.

In the context of local government, capacity building strategies include pre-service training for new officials, in-service training for current officials, technical assistance from central government or donors, and professional development programs. Critics argue that capacity building alone is insufficient; officials also need motivation, resources, and supportive systems to perform effectively.

2.2 Organizational Learning Theory

Organizational Learning Theory emphasizes collective learning and adaptation as the pathway to performance improvement. Key concepts include knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, learning from experience, and organizational adaptation. Organizational learning is seen as a continuous process through which organizations improve their performance over time.

In the context of local government, organizational learning strategies include after-action reviews, communities of practice, knowledge management systems, and learning networks. Critics argue that organizational learning requires a supportive culture and leadership commitment, which may be lacking in many local governments.

2.3 Performance Management Theory

Performance Management Theory emphasizes goal setting, monitoring, feedback, and incentives as the pathway to performance improvement. Key concepts include performance indicators, performance targets, performance monitoring, performance feedback, and performance-based incentives. Performance management is seen as a systematic process for aligning individual and organizational performance with strategic goals.

In the context of local government, performance management strategies include strategic planning, performance budgeting, performance reporting, performance appraisal, and performance-based

pay. Critics argue that performance management can be resource-intensive, may create perverse incentives, and may not be appropriate for all types of tasks.

3. STRATEGIES FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

3.1 Training and Professional Development

Training and professional development are central to capacity building approaches. Effective training programs are needs-based, practical, and ongoing. They address not only technical skills but also managerial and leadership competencies. Training may be delivered through workshops, courses, mentoring, and on-the-job learning.

In the West African context, training programs must be adapted to local conditions, including language, literacy levels, and cultural norms. Training should be linked to career advancement and performance recognition to motivate participation and application.

3.2 Motivation and Incentives

Motivation and incentives are central to performance management approaches. Effective incentive systems align individual and organizational goals, reward performance, and discourage gaming. Incentives may be financial, such as performance-based pay, or non-financial, such as recognition, promotion, and career development.

In the West African context, incentive systems must be designed to avoid corruption, favoritism, and other unintended consequences. Incentives should be transparent, fair, and based on verifiable performance data.

3.3 Systems Improvement

Systems improvement is central to both organizational learning and performance management approaches. Effective systems include clear procedures, adequate resources, reliable infrastructure, and effective coordination. Systems improvement may involve process redesign, technology adoption, and organizational restructuring.

In the West African context, systems improvement must take into account resource constraints, capacity limitations, and political dynamics. Improvements should be incremental and sustainable rather than ambitious and fragile.

3.4 Accountability Enhancement

Accountability enhancement is central to all three approaches. Effective accountability mechanisms include performance reporting, citizen oversight, audits, and sanctions for poor performance. Accountability ensures that officials are answerable for their performance and that poor performance has consequences.

In the West African context, accountability mechanisms must be adapted to local governance structures, including traditional authorities, civil society organizations, and media. Accountability should be upward (to central government) as well as downward (to citizens).

4. CONCERTED LOCAL PERFORMANCE THEORY

Based on the comparative analysis, I propose a new theoretical framework—Concerted Local Performance Theory—that integrates insights from Capacity Building Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Performance Management Theory and is adapted to the West African context.

Concerted Local Performance Theory is built on four core principles.

First, performance improvement requires capacity building at multiple levels: individual, team, and organization. Training and professional development are essential but must be accompanied by organizational changes that enable the application of new skills and knowledge.

Second, performance improvement requires organizational learning. Local governments must create systems for learning from experience, sharing knowledge, and adapting to changing conditions. This requires a supportive culture and leadership commitment.

Third, performance improvement requires performance management. Clear goals, regular monitoring, constructive feedback, and appropriate incentives are essential for aligning individual and organizational performance with development objectives.

Fourth, performance improvement requires concertation—the negotiation and coordination of actions among multiple actors. Local government officials cannot improve performance alone. They must collaborate with citizens, civil society organizations, central government, and other stakeholders. Concerted action increases the collective results that constitute local development.

Concerted Local Performance Theory emphasizes that performance is not merely an individual attribute but a collective achievement. It is produced through the interaction of multiple actors with diverse interests, resources, and perspectives. Improving performance requires building the capacity for concertation—the ability to negotiate, coordinate, and collaborate effectively.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has evaluated the improvement of local government officials' performance and its impact on local development in West Africa through a comparative analysis of three theoretical frameworks: Capacity Building Theory, Organizational Learning Theory, and Performance Management Theory. The analysis reveals that performance improvement requires a combination of strategies, including training, motivation, systems improvement, and accountability enhancement.

The article proposes a new theoretical framework—Concerted Local Performance Theory—that integrates insights from all three theories and is adapted to the West African context. Concerted Local Performance Theory emphasizes collective, negotiated results that increase performance through collaboration among multiple actors.

The article contributes to the literature by providing a theoretical framework that can guide interventions to improve local government performance in West Africa. Future research should test the framework empirically, examining the effectiveness of different performance improvement strategies across different contexts. Research should also examine the conditions under which concertation is most effective and the barriers to collaboration that must be overcome.

REFERENCES

1. Bouckaert, G., & Halligan, J. (2008). *Managing performance: International comparisons*. Routledge.
2. Perry, J. L., & Wise, L. R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review*, 50(3), 367-373.
3. Van Dooren, W., Bouckaert, G., & Halligan, J. (2015). *Performance management in the public sector* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
4. Vandenabeele, W. (2024). *The future of public service motivation: Theory and practice*. Edward Elgar Publishing.