

Job Characteristics and Employee Performance in Private Equity Firms in Kenya

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Abstract: Organizations are always in pursuit of finding ways to enhance their performance. One of the ways is to enhance employee performance by incorporating job characteristics that contribute to employee motivation, satisfaction and commitment of the employees. The job characteristics necessary for better performance of employees are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of job characteristics on the performance of employees among Private Equity Firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the effect of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback on the employee performance among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya. The theories used in the study were the Job Characteristics model, Herzberg's two-factor theory and the Demand control model. The study adopted a descriptive research design and involved a census of all 210 employees in 25 different private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya. Questionnaires were used for primary data collection. The data collection process took place between July and September, 2016. To ascertain the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test and pilot survey was conducted on one of the private equity firms where the cut-off for Cronbach alpha was taken as a value of 0.7 and the aggregate alpha value in this study was 0.817. The quantitative data in the study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis comprising the means, frequencies, percentages and standard deviations while inferential statistics which included test of hypotheses using stepwise multiple regression. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to conduct the analysis. Tables were used for ease presentation of the analysis. 116 questionnaires out of the 210 distributed were used for analysis, which is 55% of the total expected and was adequate for the study. From the findings, variety of skills, task identity, autonomy and feedback were found to affect the performance of employees. The study unveiled the significance of the relationship that exists between skill variety and employee performance with a P value of 0.005. Task identity was also found to be significant at a P value of 0.006 while was found to be significant at 0.028. Feedback was also found to be significant at a P value of 0.001. However, task significance did not significantly affect employee performance as it had a P value of 0.468. The study recommends job rotation in the Private Equity firms as this can increase the variety of skills that every employee possesses as a form of employee motivation. Recommendations were made for further research on the Organizational performance and the influence of demographic factors on employee performance.

Keywords: Autonomy, Employee Performance, Feedback, Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance.

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I. Introduction

Performance in organizations relies on the deployment of Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies that are successful in attracting, developing and retaining a highly engaged and committed personnel (Al-Ahmadi, 2009). The deployment of a highly engaged personnel is expected to drive an excellent operations system to be a firm basis for performance. The engagement of staff is a matter that requires the design of jobs in a way that will arouse staff motivation. According to Armstrong (2006), job characteristics model is one way of designing jobs based on their characteristics. Oldham and Hackman (1976, 1980) indicated that a connection of the characteristics of a job and employees' emotional and behavioral responses consists of three critical psychological states namely experienced responsibility, knowledge of results and experienced meaningfulness. These defined states of the mind are addressed by the five important characteristics of a job which are skill variety, which involves different activities requiring different skills, task identity which encompasses the completion of an entire and visible piece of work; task significance which involves the impact a particular task has on other peoples' lives; autonomy which is the freedom and pleasure in performing tasks and feedback from the job which encompasses the direct information from the job on the employee's efficiency and effectiveness.

Al-Ahmadi (2009) suggested that the performance of a job was positively linked to its nature which implies that indeed satisfaction with one's job influenced the employees' performance. The sense of job worth, feeling meaningful before others, discovering individual capabilities, and freedom in decision making positively relates to the performance of employees.

Jobs which have the best characteristics improve employees' motivation, satisfaction and dedication to work and also contribute to improvement of productivity in an organization hence eradicating some health issues while at the same time not having an impact on the morals and passion of the employees at work (Borman, 2004). Similarly, Campion, Mumford, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005), suggested that how work is designed has a considerable impact on employees' attitude and ultimate performance.

Skill variety as a component of job design shows the range of skills required to complete a particular piece of work that leads to the desired individual and job results. Task identity is the rate at which a piece of work must be completed as one, by carrying out a particular piece of work from the beginning to the end with an end product that can be seen. Task significance on the other hand reflects the rate of influence of the job to the organization and play a vital role on the job and livelihood of other employees and those without the organization (Hirschfeld, Schmitt & Bedeian, 2002). Autonomy is the rate at which work provides substantial freedom, discretion and independence to the worker (Utsch, Rauch, Rothfufs & Frese, 2006). Lastly, feedback enables employees to know how they have been performing in their work and whether there is improvement or deterioration on their work. Feedback from the particular work must offer explicit information to the staff about the usefulness of their work output and also allows them to monitor their individual progress towards the organizational goals and gives back information about their work outcome (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Al-Ahmadi (2009) suggested that the performance of a job was positively linked with its nature and this was an indication that indeed satisfaction with one's job influenced the employees' performance. According to Putterill and Rohrer (2013), the attainment of goals in the assigned tasks to workers in a given period is an indicator of employee performance. Employees take organizational goals as their own goals and always feel happy and satisfied whenever the goals are achieved (Rizwan, & Khan, 2011).

Lack of employee participation and involvement not only decreases their level of motivation, but also decreases their ability in decision making and taking responsibility of the job thus affecting their overall performance. Past studies show that employee participation in processing of information, making decisions and solving problems is positively related to motivation, contentment and efficiency, satisfaction and hence good performance of employees (Pfeffer, 2014; Wagner 2014; & Verma 2013). A job can only be well performed if that job fully utilizes job characteristics that lead to employee motivation, satisfaction and commitment hence the desired outcome is often achieved, whereas lack of this may prove otherwise. Jobs deficient in all the five job characteristics are currently a persistent social problem affecting the performance of employees (Love & Edwards, 2005). This problem also affects the performance in the Private Equity (PE) sector in Kenya.

The European Venture Capital Association (EVCA) (2007) defines Private Equity (PE) as the process of providing equity capital in form of money in the medium or long term to companies that are not quoted but have a high potential for growth. According to the Private Equity Annual Report (2014), PE funds make their money by undoubtedly convincing the holders of the capital to give their large portions of money and charge a certain percentage of these to generate the return on investment (ROI). According to Deloitte (2012) fund managers in Kenya are quite optimistic and argue that the market is improving while mobilization of local funds and experts in diaspora are returning to the country.

However, this growth can only be achieved when the challenges of performance within the PE firms are overcome. Kathurima and Kipanga (2013) found that PE firms are grappling with such challenges as redundancy, profit reduction and high employee turnover. Designing jobs in a balanced manner so as to encompass all the five characteristics namely skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback remains a topic that receives little interest from employers and policymakers as a driver of performance compared with other aspects of management such as leadership or management style (Truss, 2012). On the other hand, Gatauwa (2014) suggested that lack of awareness is the key challenge in Private Equity in Kenya because it is a relatively new concept and little research has been done regarding job characteristics in the industry. These challenges affect performance of the PE firms, which is a reflection of the actual performance of the employees.

The general objective of the study therefore, was to determine the effect of job characteristics on the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya. Similarly, the specific objectives were to determine the effect of skill variety on the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya; establish the effect of task identity on the performance of employees; find out the effect of task significance on the performance of employees; examine the effect of autonomy on the performance of employees and to find out the effect of feedback on the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

This study is significant to human resource practitioners and policy makers to offer guidelines on how to incorporate job characteristics that retain a well-motivated and productive workforce. Human resource consultants and researchers will add to their knowledge in training employers and those concerned with the employees welfare while offering new knowledge for further research. They could also be informed on issues that influence employee performance thus assisting them during employee training and coaching sessions, conducting job analysis and evaluation on behalf of their clients. Academicians who would want to carry out further research will be informed by the study as it seeks to close the gaps cited in previous studies. These gaps include small sample sizes, specific fields of study, study of only a few job characteristics which this study addresses.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Job Characteristics model was the anchor model in the study as it explains all the five job characteristics as used in the study and their effect on employee performance. An important viewpoint on factors affecting jobs and motivation is provided by Hackman and Oldham (1974) in the job characteristics model. Hackman and Oldham's framework distinguished five key components of a job that are useful in making jobs more satisfying for staff. Crucial elements of employments are specifically; skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. This study was guided by this model.

To support the study, the Herzberg two-factor theory was used to explain the importance of some job characteristics which may be considered as motivators for employees. The model of Demand-control was used to explain how job characteristics help to offer control of the job which in turn helps the employees have better well-being. Herzberg (1966, 1968) developed the two-factor theory by following a research into the source of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employees, which are the motivators and hygiene factors. The independent variables in the study such as autonomy, feedback and skill variety are examples of motivators that will lead to employee motivation and commitment to their work.

The job demand control model was used to describe how job demands affect employees and the effect of achieving proper control on the job. The model demonstrates huge amounts of experimental power, that has encouraged large scholarly work in epidemiology and different paradigms of job control as a major one in the work stress literature (Ganster & Perrewe, 2011).

2.2 Conceptual and Empirical Review

In addition to the theory and models used, the authors reviewed past studies on the aspect of employee performance in relation to the five job characteristics which are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), skill variety is the instance where a job requires various tasks in order to carry out a complete piece of work and involves using various skills and abilities by the employee. Skill variety and knowledge of the job cannot be separated where knowledge of the job is a characteristic of the job that was not identified uniquely in literature, but is described as a characteristic that addresses issues of solving problems, processing information, decision making, generation of innovative ideas and specialization (Davis, 2005). Skill variety is considered as the number of various task elements that are necessary for the job fulfilment as it communicates clarity of knowledge (Pentland, 2003). According to the literature of careers, employees at the start of their careers make attempts to discover tasks from which they attain or achieve their goals (Feldman & Thomas, 2012). Inherent characteristics of a job including significance of a task and skill variety are usually mostly associated with low rates of absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 1990). A study by Kemboi, Biwott, Chenuos and Rutto (2013) on skill variety, feedback and employee performance employed a descriptive design that provided a description of related aspects of the areas of interest to the current researcher. Their study sought to look at the design of the job and performance of employees who are nurses at the hospital. One thousand nine hundred and forty five (1945) nurses were the target, mainly working at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret in Kenya. Three hundred and twenty nurses were then selected as the sample, using the simple random sampling. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics involved Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. Skill variety was found to significantly affect job performance.

Bremner, and Carrière (2011) studied on the effects of skill variety, task significance, autonomy and task identity on job-related work stress at the medical facility and the mediating effect of the importance of work. A survey was conducted on a sample of approximately one thousand one hundred (1100) workers from a Canadian hospital and was administered in the French language. The study established that skill variety was found to be the most significant job characteristic overall. The study had a number of limitations to be addressed. First, because the data were cross-sectional, a direction of causality could not be proven for any of the relationships between the examined variables. Furthermore, due to the chosen methodology the data

collected was prone to containing a degree of common method variance. There was a low response rate, where the administrative staff were under-represented in the sample.

Task Identity is the rate at which a particular job needs the conclusion of a whole piece of a job. Tonges (2004), indicated that, role uncertainty is associated with lack of clarity of job scope, responsibility and function of each group member, unclear task description and incoherent direction from supervisors. Locke and Edwin (2008), claim that task identity which is the amount to which a job demands for the accomplishment of a given task whose commencement is well thought-out with the desired outcome and therefore should have identity. In addition to the other components of a job, task identity is seen to have a positive effect on the output and general employee performance (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007).

According to Gatauwa (2014), little awareness in PE is considered as the main challenge that faces the industry which may be related to lack of appropriate task identity by the employees. Similarly, Choge, Chepkuiyeng and Chelimo (2014) explored the effect of Task Identity on Employee Motivation to find out if there was a significant relationship between task identity and employee motivation. A survey of Eldoret polytechnic was done whose objective was to determine the relationship between task identity, and employee motivation. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed as the methodology of the research. The findings showed that task identity had a significant effect on employee motivation and is one of the strategies of improving the level of employee motivation. This means that up to 67.9% of employee motivation could be explained by task identity factor. The findings were limited to the learning sector and the aforementioned institution only. The research was a case study and so the findings could not be generalized to different organizational set ups.

Adebayo and Ezeanya (2011) carried out a survey in Nigeria on task identity and job autonomy as Correlates of Burnout among Nurses in Jos, Nigeria among nurses. A total of 79 nurses participated in the field study. The study found that task identity was capable of reducing burnout through the second process identified in the JDR model Task identity was closely related to job autonomy even though not significantly (Adebayo & Ezeanya, 2011). However, the sample of nurses of this research was too small and thus limits generalization of the burnout correlates to Nigerian employee nurses in general terms.

Task significance is explained as rate at which the integral tasks of the job are significant to the company and have a relevant effect on the job and livelihood of colleagues and those without the organization (Hirschfeld, Schmitt & Bedeian, 2002). Task significance is an integral part of job characteristics which contributes to employee performance. A high level of task significance is relative to a low level of absence from work (Rentsch & Steel, 2004). El-Asmar (2013), studied the roles of task significance and social perceptions in job stress and Employee Engagement. The study combined literature in task significance and social perceptions in order to help out explain employee involvement in its two dimensions: job and organization engagement (Saks, 2006).

The study implemented a cross-sectional quantitative research design over a period of three weeks from February 16th to March 6th, 2013. Data was collected from 337 participants. As a result, the relations between task significance and the thought social effect and worth showed the variance in hindrance stressors as confirmed by the moderated mediation analyses. Another study carried out by Grant (2008) on significance of task significance on job performance effects, relational mechanisms, and boundary conditions found that correlational designs and confounded manipulations have barred researchers from assessing the contributory impact of task significance on job performance.

Shane (2008) noted that independence has considerable control over parts of one's work and is the person's energy to assume responsibility of their work. Stewart, Stansfield and Tapp, (2004) recommend that autonomy is impacted by expectations of roles, organizational culture, open doors for self-governing basic leadership and chances to impact work life components, for example, booking. In addition, Lawler, Mohrman, and Ledford (2013) noted that task autonomy and related types of employee commitment on the job were discovered powerful in ninety per cent of organizations.

Adebayo and Ezeanya (2011) studied task identity and autonomy as Correlates of burnout among Nurses in Jos, Nigeria, amongst the nurses in this region. Seventy nine (79) nurses were involved in this study which was carried out using field study. Their study found that when employees enjoy increased levels of independence, they are likely to live up to expectation regarding their job demand thereby reducing their experience on burnout. They also have greater control on their jobs which helps them deal with the demands therein (Adebayo & Ezeanya, 2011).

Saragih (2011) carried out a research on the effect of autonomy on job results which are satisfaction, employee performance, and work stress, with self-efficacy as the intervening variable. The descriptive study sought to establish the impact of work satisfaction on work performance and work stress on work performance.

Employees receive feedback from the outcomes that result in construction and maintenance of their jobs (Aldrich & Martinez, 2001). Scholars have illustrated that this kind of feedback had minimal but positive influence with objective and subjective indicators of work output (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

Nancy and Daniel (2007) indicated that, remarkable improvement can be seen with the immediate impact of both the feedback and the workers' ability to structure work, whether independently or in teams. So as to improve employee work output, feedback channels play a very vital role in companies (Elkins & Phillips, 2000).

Kemboi *et al.* (2013), found that feedback can assist the nurses with understanding their impact on the organization, program, patient and the health care system in general. The study tested the hypothesis that feedback had no significant effect on job performance which was accepted after test of the hypothesis. There was no significant relationship between job feedback and employee's performance. Another study by Anseel and Lievens (2007) sought to determine the association of the feedback environment, work satisfaction and the mediating role of supervisor-staff approach in a Belgian scenario. The results also indicated the helpfulness of realizing and assessing the feedback environment for proper understanding of feedback processes to enhance feedback mediations within the companies. The limitations in their research included the suggestion that the findings should be cautiously interpreted.

2.3 Conceptual framework and Hypotheses

Some of the research gaps cited included generalization of findings by researchers, use of small sample sizes and failure to conduct similar studies in financial institutions such as Private Equity firms. Studies by Choge, Chepkuyeng and Chelimo (2014); Kemboi, Biwott, Chenuos and Rutto (2013) and Adebayo and Ezeanya (2011) were all carried out in the health sector. The studies relied on feedback from mainly nurses and not the entire organization to analyze the performance of employees. In addition, various studies assumed one direction of the organizational structure as far as feedback is concerned as opposed to cutting across the organizations. In addition, studies by El-Asmar (2013) and Saragih (2011) focused on only some and not all the five characteristics of a job to determine employee performance. The survey by Gatauwa (2014) failed to find out the reasons for little awareness in PE firms. Other studies were based on review of literature and not actual surveys as in the current study.

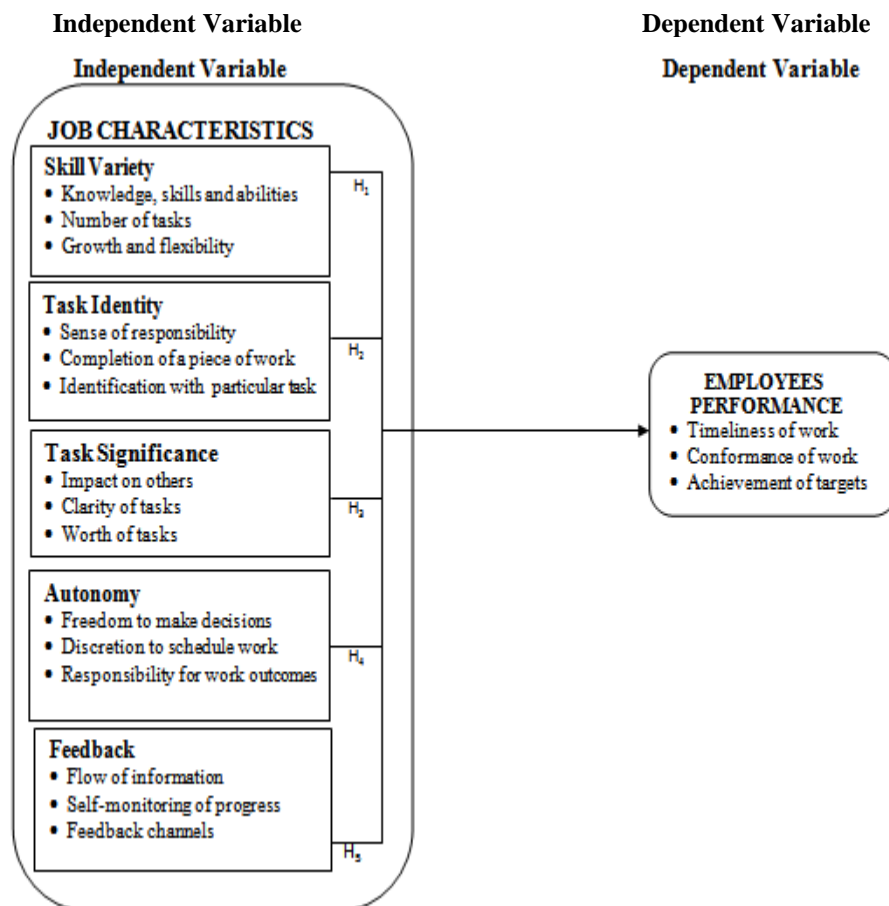


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2017)

From the conceptual framework, the independent variable of the study was the job characteristics which was operationalized through skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The dependent variable which was determined by these variables was employee performance. Skill variety was measured by how well the employees were knowledgeable about their work, their combination of skills and abilities. Skill variety was seen to affect the performance of employees. Task identity was also found to have an effect on employee performance and was operationalized by the sense of responsibility by the employee on their jobs, how well they could complete a task independently and identify with that particular task. Task significance in this study was seen to affect employee performance through the impact of a particular job on other employees and their jobs, how clearly the employees understood their tasks and the worth of the task. Autonomy and feedback were also assumed to affect employee's performance. Autonomy was measured by the freedom the employees were given to make decisions on their own, the discretion to schedule tasks feedback was operationalized by the flow of information in the organization.

The key assumptions of the study were tested by the regression analysis. The Hypotheses in the study included the following:

- H₁: There is a relationship between skill variety and the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.
- H₂: There is a relationship between task identity and the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.
- H₃: There is a relationship between task significance and the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.
- H₄: There is a relationship between autonomy and the performance of employees among private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.
- H₅: There is a relationship between feedback and the performance of employees among Private equity firms in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

III. Research Methodology

This study adopted a positivism approach which holds that real structures exist independent of human consciousness, but that knowledge is socially created, with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) contending that knowledge of reality is a result of social conditioning. The positivist approach is based upon values of reason, truth and validity and focus is purely on facts, gathered through direct observation and experience and measured empirically using quantitative methods – surveys and experiments - and statistical analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). The positivist approach was appropriate for this study since it is characterized by the testing of hypotheses. The descriptive research type of design used in the study sought to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. The data which was collected was then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The target population involved employees from private equity firms that are for profit and are not listed by the NSE. These 25 firms have an estimated total of 210 employees who formed the target population for this study. The study was a census where all the known PE firms were considered and all employees were targeted. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The responses from the pilot test were used to test reliability.

Data analysis was then carried out with the aid of the software programme SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Regression analysis was used for this study because performance is considered a continuous variable (Field, 2009). The study also used multivariate analysis to perform regression on the various relationships that existed between the variables in order to understand the strength of each predictor variable.

Considering the first empirical model used in the study, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback were all regressed on employee performance as shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots 3.1$$

Where: Y = Employee Performance

ϵ_i = Error term

β_0 = Beta Coefficient

X_1 = Skill Variety

X_2 = Task Identity

X_3 = Task Significance

X_4 = Autonomy

X_5 = Feedback

$B_1 \dots B_5$ = regression coefficient of the five variables

IV. Research Findings

4.1 Respondents Characteristics

The researcher targeted 25 PE firms in Nairobi County in Kenya. 210 questionnaires were distributed to the firms and were self-administered where the questionnaires were dropped and picked later. The questionnaires were given to all staff in the organizations. The researcher collected the data in the Month of June and July, 2016 where a total of 116 questionnaires were collected for analysis.

Table 4.1: Cross - Tabulation of Biographic information

		Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Age	21-25 yrs	18	10	28
	26- 30yrs	16	27	43
	30-35 yrs	11	4	15
	36- 40 yrs	10	6	16
	40- 50 yrs	1	2	3
	Missing			11
	Total		56	49
Level of education	Primary	0	1	1
	Secondary	3	2	5
	College	24	28	52
	University	28	17	45
	Missing			13
	Total		55	48
No of years worked in the organization	1- 2 Yrs	23	11	34
	2-4 Yrs	23	33	56
	4-6 Yrs	7	4	11
	6- 10 Yrs	3	1	4
	10 -15 Yrs	0	1	1
	Missing			10
	Total		56	50
Department	Operations	13	12	25
	Finance	20	19	39
	Business Development	7	8	15
	Others	16	9	25
	Missing			12
	Total		56	48

Source: Survey data (2016)

From the findings, the highest number of respondents were aged between 26-30 years, 27 of who were female and the total for this category was 43. The age category with the least respondents was between 40 – 50 years, who had 2 female respondents and 1 male respondent. The respondents who had acquired the college level of education were the highest in number, with a total of 52. Out of these, 28 were female while 24 were male respondents. The lowest recorded level of education by the respondents was the primary level which had 1 respondent.

The findings also indicate that 56 employees had worked in their respective companies for 2 – 4 years where 33 of these were female and 23 were male. Those who had worked in the respective companies for 10 – 15 years were the least with only 1 respondent. According to departments, the finance department had highest number of 39, 19 of who were female and 20 were male. The department with the least number of respondents was business development which had 15 respondents, 8 of who were female and 7 male respondents. The cross-tabulation on table above summarizes these characteristics.

4.2 Descriptive Characteristics of variables

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics on variables

Variable	No. of Respondents	Alpha Score	Mean	Std. Dev.
Skill Variety	116	0.763	3.629	1.00184
Task Identity	116	0.724	3.701	0.93290
Task Significance	116	0.849	3.508	1.06913
Autonomy	116	0.866	3.477	1.01390
Feedback	116	0.853	3.727	0.94448
Performance	116	0.844	3.843	0.84698
Overall Alpha Score		0.817		

The total number of questionnaires used for analysis were 116. The items used to items were adequately reliable as they had a Cronbach alpha value of 0.817 against the cut off of 0.7. The aggregate scores of the respondents on skill variety was 3.6293, which also indicated that to a great extent, the jobs involve a number of tasks and has inbuilt flexibility. The aggregate scores for this section was 3.7011 which meant that they were able to identify with particular tasks and be responsible for the outcomes. The aggregate scores of 3.508 on task significance meant that the respondents moderately agreed that task significance affected their performance. There were aggregate scores of 3.727 on feedback, which indicated that the respondents agreed to a great extent that feedback contributed to employee performance among the private equity firms.

Test of Hypotheses

Regression analysis was used in this study because performance is considered a continuous variable (Field, 2009). Multivariate analysis was used to perform regression on the relationships that exist between the various variables for an understanding of the strength of each predictor variable.

Table 4.3: Relationship Between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

Model Summary						
		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
		.810 ^a	.657	.641	.39505	1.787
Anova						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	32.847	5	6.569	42.094	.000 ^b
	Residual	17.167	110	.156		
	Total	50.014	115			
Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Err	Beta		
	(Constant)	.417	.235		1.772	.079
	Skill Variety	.225	.078	.235	2.891	.005
	Task Identity	.213	.076	.243	2.797	.006
	Task Significance	.041	.056	.049	.728	.468
	Autonomy	.152	.068	.183	2.233	.028
	Feedback	.259	.073	.283	3.551	.001
Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						

Source: Research data (2016)

The regression model established the strength in the relationship of the dependent and independent variables in the study. The adjusted R² of 0.641 which is 64.1% is explained by the corresponding change in the job characteristics. The ANOVA F value of 42.094 and the p-values of 0.000 indicate that the model is statistically significant, hence H_a is supported.

Skill variety has a Beta value of 0.235 which indicates a positive relationship between the independent and the dependent variable employee performance. The level of significance of 0.005 is less than the threshold of

0.05, where the null hypothesis is not supported if the $P < 0.05$. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship skill variety and employees performance and therefore hypothesis one of the study is supported.

Task identity was also found to be significant at a P value of 0.006 and a Beta value of 0.243 which indicates a positive relationship between the independent variable task identity and the dependent variable employee performance. The level of significance of 0.006 is less than the threshold of 0.05, where the null hypothesis is not supported if the $P < 0.05$. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship. Hypothesis two of the study is therefore supported.

However, task significance did not significantly affect employee performance as it had a P value of 0.468. Task significance has a very low Beta value of 0.049 which indicates a positive but weak or no relationship between the independent variable task significance and the dependent variable employee performance. The level of significance of 0.468 is greater than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that there is statistically no significant relationship. Therefore hypothesis three of the study is not supported.

Autonomy has a Beta value of 0.183 which indicates a positive relationship between the independent variable autonomy and the dependent variable employee performance. The level of significance of 0.028 is less than the threshold of 0.05 indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship. The level of significance of 0.028 is less than the threshold of 0.05, where the null hypothesis is not supported if the $P < 0.05$. The result indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship. The study concludes therefore, that there is a relationship between autonomy and employee performance hence hypothesis four is supported.

Feedback had a Beta value of 0.283 which indicates a positive relationship between the independent variable feedback and the dependent variable employee performance. The level of significance of 0.001 which is the lowest of all other variables. The level of significance of 0.001 is less than the threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship. Therefore, the results indicate that we reject the null hypothesis hence conclude that there exists a statistically significant relationship between feedback and employee performance. Hypothesis five of the study is supported.

V. Discussions And Implications For Theory And Practice

The results of the first objective of the study agree with the findings of Chandler (2007), who indicated that a broad variety of skills are necessary for employees to achieve growth, and a diversity of skills is also necessary for flexibility at work. Both skill variety and task identity increase motivation hence improve the performance of employees. On the other hand, the findings on task significance indicate employees' performance may not be directly or significantly affected by task significance as explained by the Herzberg two factor theory of Motivation.

The results of the test of hypothesis four on the relationship between Autonomy and employee performance indicated that freedom to schedule work, make decisions and let the employees be responsible for their outcomes generally improved performance which emanates from the motivation. The respondents felt that being given the freedom they required to carry out their jobs led to success in their jobs and ultimately, improved their performance. In the present study, feedback was found to contribute to employee performance as supported by high levels of motivation and information freely flowing across the organization at all levels. The study found that in PE firms, feedback was given through performance reviews and the tests reveal that there is a statistically significant relationship between Feedback and employee performance in private equity firms.

VI. Recommendations

Job characteristics should be considered in planning and evaluation of employees' jobs and performance respectively. Job rotation are some of the methods that can be adopted to ensure that all employees are part of the organization to achieve ultimate goals. Further research is recommended on PE firms to establish the factors that contribute to the general performance of these firms as opposed to studying the performance of employees only.

In addition studies on all the attributes of a job will help HR practitioners to know how they will improve the performance of their employees by considering these job characteristics which are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The use of the job characteristics model may also be could also be referred more by scholars to explain specific variables. This study recommends further research to test the impact of demographic factors such as age, education and psychological state of employees to determine their performance.

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