



Effect of employee participation on performance in the county government of Kakamega, Kenya

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Abstract

The promulgation of the Constitution Kenya, 2010 ushered in 47 devolved county governments. These county governments are new centres of power whose main mandate is delivery of better services to the citizenry who had long been suffering from marginalization and discrimination by the central government. County governments have not prioritized employee performance to meet the increasing expectations of the public. Furthermore, there have been numerous reports across the country of discontented employees, numerous strikes, and poor performance cases among the public service. In view of the foregoing, this study sought to investigate the effect of employee participation on performance in the County Government of Kakamega. The study used descriptive research design. The target population for this study was 6,266 employees of the County Government of Kakamega. The study used a sample population of 375 employees. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that employee participation had a strong positive effect on employee performance. The study recommended that the County Government of Kakamega should come up with policy guidelines and procedures for engaging staff at various decision making levels.

Keywords: employee participation, performance, service delivery

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Employee performance refers to the results of employees' contribution that makes it possible to realize certain results. Afshan, Sobia, Kamran and Nasir (2012) ^[1] define performance as the achievement of specific chores measured against pre-determined standards of accurateness, wholeness, cost and speed. Noordzij (2013) asserts that employees' behaviour in relation to organizational performance is noticeable in three different ways, namely: act, process or manner of performing; execution of a duty; and any accomplishment. There is a common performance crisis in public service across both developed and developing countries. This has necessitated the need for efficiency and appraisal instruments to help assess the performance of government institutions or programs perceived to be inadequate (Nabukeera, Ali & Raja, 2014). Kalia Nana and Adjovub (2014), reiterate that employees make firms competitive as they are success catalysts and their performance absence creates a vacuum through which organizations may sink into obscurity. There are several determinants of employee performance, and these include training and improvement on worker execution (Thao & Hwang, 2015), employee participation, Job security (Watson, 2010), just but to mention a few. The promulgation of the new constitution in 2010 ushered in 47 devolved county governments in Kenya (Lubale, 2012). These county governments are new centres of power whose main mandate is delivery of better services to the citizenry who had long been suffering from marginalization and discrimination among other discriminating practices by the central government. Counties need to establish attractive compensation and benefits schemes, establish training and development programs for employees, encourage employee

participation in decision-making processes and ensure job security for all staff (Prasad & Prasad, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The promulgation of the Constitution Kenya, 2010 ushered in 47 devolved county governments (Lubale, 2012). These county governments are new centres of power whose main mandate is delivery of better services to the citizenry who had long been suffering from marginalization and discrimination by the central government. Despite all these efforts, there have been reports across the country of discontented employees, numerous strikes, and poor performance cases across the public service (Chebet, 2015). Most of the studies carried out on employee performance have dwelled on job security, compensation, training, remuneration and work environment (Mohammed & Nimalathan, 2016; ^[6] Ali & Davies, 2009; Prasad & Prasad, 2010; Watson, 2010; Thao & Hwang, 2015) as factors that influence employee performance. Despite all these studies, employee performance in the public sector has remained dismal. This study therefore sought to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the effect of employee participation on performance in the County Government of Kakamega.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of employee participation on performance in the county government of Kakamega, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

The theory that anchors this study is the goal-setting theory (Locke, 1968). The theory clearly stipulates that the successful product or outcome can serve as a reward in

itself. A number of parameters are important to consider for goal efficiency attainment namely; nearness, toil, defined specifications and response timeline (Femi, 2013) [3]. Response is needed for gaging progress to the goal and ascertains whether the level of exertion is adequate and in the right direction (Wanjala & Kimutai, 2015). Goal setting theory is fundamental to this research because it connect objectives to performance outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2006).

Performance focuses on certain outcomes which include; quality of output, output timeliness, quantity of output, efficiency of completed work and effectiveness of the completed work (Gitonga, 2016). Employee performance indicates the effectiveness of employee’s specific actions that contribute to attain organizational goals. The results are as and according to the predetermined goals (Agusioma, 2014).

It is important that a distinction is drawn between, passive involvement, active involvement, and on the other, a distinction be made between managed participation and democratic participation, (Kerlin, 2009; Teasdale, 2012). Managed participation is where practices are facilitated by managers who are professionals and democratic. Participation is where any member can initiate and organize actions on members’ proposals (Ridley-Duff, 2009). In principle, participative democracy set space for each co-owner the right to participate in everyday operations of the entity. The same right extends to voting and access to information, (Irizar & MacLeod, 2012).

Employee participation helps make the distinction between involvement and dedication on the account that involvement is purely management oriented while dedication is employee steered. Further distinction is made between integrative negotiating on the value and principles that inform management practices and the conversational negotiating that influences the allocation of wealth created by an enterprise. It is also imperative to elucidate the distinction between partaking and consensus, recognizing that there may be a democratic decree to both increase and decrease specific types of participation (Tripathy, 2014).

3. Research Design

According to Kothari and Garg (2014) [4] social science research designs are classified as descriptive/diagnostic or exploratory. Descriptive research design was used in this study. Descriptive research studies refer to studies which deal with defining the qualities of a specific individual or groups for instance employees (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [4]. This design is appropriate for this study since Zikmund (2003) [9] note that descriptive research design is intended to produce statistical information about the aspects of the research issue (in this case employee performance) that may interest policy makers.

3.1 Target Population

According to Kothari and Garg (2014) [4] population refers to all the items under consideration in any field of inquiry. A study population is a group of individuals taken from the general population who share a common characteristic (Sekara & Bougie, 2010) [7]. Target population includes all the members real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which researchers wish to generalize the results of their research (Singleton & Strait, 2010) [8]. The target population for this study included 6,266 employees in the

County Government of Kakamega drawn from different Departments.

3.1 Sampling Frame

Sekaran and Bougie (2011) [7] defines sampling frame as a physical representation of all the elements in the population from which the sample is drawn. A sampling frame consists of a list of items from which the sample is to be drawn (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [4]. The sampling frame of this study consisted of 6,266 employees in the County Government of Kakamega as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Population Sampling Frame

Job Group	Population of Employees	Sample
Q & above	47	3
N-P	124	7
L-M	176	11
J-K	1016	61
G-H	1123	67
E-F	1392	83
A-D	2388	143
Total	6,266	375

Source: Department of Economic Planning, CGKK (2018)

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Kothari (2010) [5], a sample is a section of a population that is selected for examination and analyses and used to make inferences to the population from which it is obtained. Sampling technique is the process of selecting respondents that constitute a sample (Kothari & Garg, 2014) [4]. In deriving the sample from the sample frame, Yamane (1967) statistical formula was employed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$$

Where;

- n: Sample size
- N: Population under study
- e: Margin error (0.05)
- 1: Constant

A margin error of 0.05 was used to compute the sample size, which according to Yamane (1967) gives the largest sample size at a given confidence level. Substituting the margin error of 0.05 and the target population of 6,266 in the formula above gives a sample size of 375. The proportionate sample sizes for each stratum were computed on the basis of the size of the stratum and the target population. This study therefore used a sample population of 375 respondents for data collection.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) [3], a data collection instrument is a document containing questions presented in a systematic, highly precise fashion. Data collection instrument refers to the device used to collect data such as a paper questionnaire or computer assisted interviewing system (Sekara & Bougie, 2010) [7]. The instrument that was used for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire. This provided respondents with a fixed set of choices commonly referred to as closed questions. The closed-ended questions consist alternative answers expressed in a Likert scale style. Each item here is evaluated between respondents whose total score is high and those whose score is low (Kothari, 2004) [4].

3.5 Pilot Testing

According to Halley (2007), a pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, adverse events, and effect size (statistical variability) in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. The data collection instrument, which is the questionnaire, was pilot tested on 5% of the sample size to ensure that it was manageable, relevant and effective. Creswell (2003) [2] reiterates that the size of a sample to be used for pilot testing varies depending on the time, cost and practicability, but would tend to be between 5-10 percent of that of the main survey. In order to minimize the possible instrumentation error and hence increase the reliability of the data collected, the reliability of the pre-test observation schedule was tested using scores obtained from a single test administered to individuals from within the sampling frame and hence save time (Kothari, 2004) [4].

4. Reliability Results

The reliability tests for the questionnaire in this study gave an overall Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of 0.8302 as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 1: Summary of Cronbach’s Alpha

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Accept/Reject
Employee Participation	6	0.889	Accept
Employee Performance	8	0.821	Accept
Average		0.855	Accept

Source: Research Data, 2019

All constructs depicted that the value of Cronbach’s alpha were above the suggested value of 0.7. The overall Cronbach’s alpha was 0.855 which means that there is an acceptable degree of consistency among the responses against each item.

Table 2: Employee Performance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.568 ^a	.323	.298	.995

a. Predictors: (constant), employee participation.

In the model summary (Table 2) the "R" column represents the value of R, which is a measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable – employee performance. The value of .568 indicates a good level of prediction. The value of R Square (.323) indicates how much of the variance in employee performance was explained by the aspect of employee participation. This value expressed as a percentage means that the model explains 32.3% of the variance in employee performance among employees of Kakamega County Government. This is the proportion of variance in employee performance that is explained by the predictor variable. However, to assess the statistical significance of the result it was necessary to look at the ANOVA results shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
1 Regression	51.869	1	12.967	13.101	.001 ^b
Residual	108.879	374	.990		
Total	160.748	375			

a. Dependent variable: Employee performance

b. Independent variable: employee participation.

Source: Research Data, 2019.

From the results in Table 3, the model reached statistical significance [F (1, 374) = 13.101, R² = .990, sig. <.05], implying that the model was highly significant and adequate enough to explain the variance in employee performance among employees in the County Government of Kakamega.

Table 4: Regression Output

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.040	.523		1.987	.049
Employee participation	.241	.119	.199	2.026	.015

From Table 4, the regression equation is;

$$Y = 1.040 + 0.199X_1 + 0.523$$

From the equation, the coefficient indicate how much employee performance among employees of the County Government of Kakamega varies with employee participation. It is evident from the results that employee participation contributes positively to employee performance and it is significant. This is in line with the findings by Tripathy (2014) that employee participation helps make the distinction between involvement and dedication on the account that involvement is purely management oriented, while dedication is employee steered. Overall, the results confirm that employee performance among employees of the County Government of Kakamega is influenced by employee participation as conceptualized in the model.

5. Summary of Findings

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of employee participation on performance in the County government of Kakamega. The findings revealed that participation of employees in decision making had a positive impact on employee performance. This implies that delegation of duties to employees at lower cadre help staff gain relevant job experience that is a prerequisite for promotion. This in itself is a morale booster to employees and serves as an intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, employees should have a chance to take part in goal setting process, help in ownership of the decision and at the same time enhance achievement of the set objectives.

5.1 Conclusion

The conclusion of the study was drawn from study findings after regression analysis derived from the study objectives. The findings revealed that participation of employees in

decision making had a positive impact on employee performance. This implies that delegation of duties to junior staff provides relevant job skills for career progression.

5.2 Recommendation

The study recommends that the county government should come up with policy guidelines and procedures of engaging staff at various decisions making levels to enhance staff participation in decision making.

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