

Workplace Environment and Employees Performance in the Public Sector: A Case of Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

The public sector play important roles in worldwide economies and their employees are the best sources of delivering good services to their customers. The workplace environment is very vital in employee satisfaction, and the broad concept of office design also includes the workflow. The case study was carried out in the ministry of lands and housing. This study concentrated on four variables; office design, social support, job characteristics, employee health and safety as well as job incentives in relations to employee performance. The target population for this study was the 950 staff working at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development head office in Nairobi. A stratified sampling technique was employed to divide the population into different strata i.e. senior management, middle level management and low level management so as to draw randomly a predetermined number of units. The researcher used simple random sampling to select a sample of 95 respondents. Primary research data was collected from the staff of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development using a questionnaire which was self-administered by the researcher to minimize variation in data collection procedures and ensure consistency. Secondary data was sourced from publications, journals, articles and the internet. The collected data was processed and descriptively analysed using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as regression were also carried out. A Statistical Package Social Sciences aided the data analysis computer and the finding were presented using tables and graphs. From the analysis, there was a positive relationship between office design and employee performance as shown by the increase in employee performance for a unit change in office design. There exist a strong positive relationship between social support and employee performance. The findings shows that a unit increases in social support factors would lead to improvement in employee performance. From the analysis the job security and Job requirements in their organization to very large extent affect job performance respectively. According to regression model a unit improvement in employee health and safety would lead to increase on employee performance. On workplace incentives, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that performance recognition can improve their job performance. There exist a strong positive relationship between workplace incentives and employee performance meaning as workplace incentives improves the employee performance also improves. On the basis of the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations can be made; since office design lead to better employee performance, the study recommend that management should set aside enough resource for the office physical conditions. Social support factors are important aspects of employee performance, the study recommend that the management keep abreast of the existing relationship in the organization to ensure health relationships are maintained between

coworker and supervisors. Job characteristics affect employee performance, the study therefore conclude that every job should well design, job requirements must be well stipulated to ensures that employee know what is expected of them from every duty. On employee health and safety, the study recommend that health and safety of the employees to be responsibility of both the management and employees. On workplace incentives, the study recommends that the management should offer both financial and non-financial incentives towards improving the employee job performance. The study recommends for various methods of financial compensation such as performance based pay, bonuses and shares allocation.

Key Words: *Workplace Environment, Employees Performance, Human Resource Management, Public Sector, Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, there has been a strong trend for corporate organizations and businesses to reconfigure the spaces of their offices in new ways and models. In addition, the shift towards more exciting and flexible workplace environment and the need to meet the diverse and growing expectations and requirements of different employees has led to the rise of debates about how and where productive work is accomplished (Carnevale, 2002). In a 2003 survey by Management Today magazine, virtually all (97%) of respondents said that they regarded their place of work as a symbol of whether or not they were valued by their employer. The public sector play important roles in worldwide economies and their employees are the best sources of delivering good services to their customers. Excellent services provided and offered by employees can create a positive perception and ever lasting image in the eyes of shareholders, lenders, and statutory authorities. The conduciveness of the office environment has first time impression on the customers and the welfare of the employees. Hughes (2007) surveyed 2000 employees pertaining to various organizations and industries in multiple levels. The reported results of these survey showed that nine out of ten believed that a workspace quality affects the attitude of employees and increases their performance. Employees in different organizations have different office designs. Every office has unique furniture and spatial arrangements, lighting and heating arrangements and different levels of noise (Black & Lynch, 2006).

An independent research firm conducted a research on US workplace environment (Gensler, 2006). In March 2006, a survey was conducted by taking a sample size of 2013. The research was related to; workplace designs, work satisfaction and productivity. 89% of the respondents rated design from important to very important. Almost 90% of senior officials revealed that effective workplace design is important for the increase in employees' productivity. The final outcome of the survey suggested that businesses can enhance their productivity by improving their workplace designs. A rough estimation was made by executives, which showed that almost 22% increase can be achieved in the company's performance if their offices are well designed. The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID, 2005) carried out an independent study and revealed that the physical workplace design is one of the top three factors which affect performance and job satisfaction. The study results showed that 31% of people were satisfied with their jobs and had pleasing workplace environments. 50% of people were seeking jobs and said that they would prefer to work in company/organizations where the physical environment is good.

The environment is man's immediate surrounding which he manipulates for his existence. The workplace environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's

business world. Today's workplace is different, diverse, and constantly changing. Therefore, the workplace entails an environment in which the worker performs his work and hence an effective workplace is an environment where results can be achieved as expected by management (Mike, 2010). Physical environment as an aspect of the work environment affect how employees in an organization interact, perform tasks, and are led. Physical environment therefore has directly affected the human sense and subtly changed interpersonal interactions and thus productivity. This is so because the characteristics of a room or a place of meeting for a group have consequences regarding productivity and satisfaction level. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost limitless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created an environment where the business needs its employees more than the employees need the business (Smith, 2011).

The type of workplace environment in which employees operate determines whether or not such organizations' will prosper (Chandrasekhar, 2011). Physical workplace environment contextualizes the office layout and design while psychosocial factors include working condition, role congruity and social support from supervisors. Policies encompass employment conditions of employees derived from industrial instruments and agreements negotiated with employees and unions, along with our human resources policies. A healthy workplace environment makes good business sense and is characterised by respect that supports employee engagement and creates a high performance culture that encourages innovation and creativity (Kohun, 2002). To continuously improve workplace conditions, special attention to a performance culture that values every single employee and promotes a sustainable work-life balance should be embraced (World at work, 2007). Effective workplace communication is a key to cultivation of success and professionalism. A company that communicates throughout the workplace in an effective manner is more likely to avoid problems with completing the daily procedures, and less likely to have a problem with improper occurrence and will generate a stronger morale and a more positive attitude towards work. When employees communicate effectively with each other, productivity will increase because effective communication means less complains and more work getting done (Quilan, 2001). It removes confusion and frees up wasted time that would have been otherwise spent on explanation or argument. It makes workplace more enjoyable, less anxiety among co-workers which in turn means positive attitude towards work and increased productivity (Taylerson, 2012).

Working in a harmony environment where employees are friendly, employers are supportive and treat everyone equally, and all members are ready to help and interact with each other, enthusiasm for other and sharing knowledge, experience, information to each other that definitely result in improving performance of each individual and the whole organization, and vice versa. Haynes (2008, in Demet Leblebici, 2012) explains the behavioral components of the office environment that have the greatest impact on office productivity. In all of the work patterns, it was found that interaction was perceived to be the component to have the most positive effect on productivity, and distraction was perceived to have the most negative. Employee performance is the combined result of effort, ability, and perception of tasks (Platt, 2010). Employees' performance is imperative for organizational outcomes and success. Every organization requires highly performing individuals in order to ensure competitive advantage and attainment of corporate goals. High employee performance is therefore one of the critical determinants of the level of organizational productivity and accomplishments. Accomplishing tasks and performing at a high level can be a source of satisfaction, with feelings of mastery and pride. Organisations deemed as a positive place to work will more likely have a competitive edge

since they are in a better position to attract and retain highly skilled employees'. This is a significant consideration in the current tight labour market. A positive workplace environment is likely to result in less employee turnover, fewer cases of fraud, better safety practices, easier to attract and retain qualified employees and improved employees' wellbeing (Cunnen, 2006).

People in daily lives and doing business always adhere with both natural and social environments. Workplace environment includes both physical and behavioral components which have both positive and negative impact to productivity or performance of employees. The employee's workplace environment that most impacts on the level of employee's motivation and subsequent performance. There are number factors of workplace that affect employee's performance such as interesting work which employees enjoy their working, opportunity to develop special abilities that give employees to express and maximize their capacity, adequate information, enough authority, sufficient help and equipment, friendly and helpful coworkers, opportunity to see results of work, competent supervision, clearly defined responsibilities are considered to be the job factors that motivates employees performance (Chandrasekar, 2011). The environment that people are required to work in can have a significant impact on their ability to undertake the tasks that they have been asked to do. This can affect productivity and employee health and well-being. The key factors fall into two categories, those that are driven by procedures, protocols and management requirements and the factors that arise from premises, office or factory design. Management driven factors include the development of Organization plans such as the allocation of responsibilities at all levels of the organization, definition of job descriptions and the degree of access to the management and administrative support needed to complete their tasks; Working patterns, shift-working, break times, absence or holiday cover; and Health and safety policies, including the provision of training, development of safe working practices and the adequate supply of protective clothing and equipment. Employees spend fifty percent of their lives within indoor environments, which greatly influence their performance capabilities (Sundstrom, 1994). Better physical workplace environment will boosts employees' performance and ultimately improve their productivity (Challenger, 2000).

Many factors influence employee performance; and workplace environment factors stands out as the key determinants of performance. It is the key multi character factor intended to attain outcomes and has a major connection with planned objectives of the organization (Sabir *et al.*, 2012). Favourable workplace environment guarantees the wellbeing of employees as well as enables them to exert themselves to their roles with all energy that may translate to higher performance (Taiwo, 2010). Land is critical to the economic, social, and cultural development of every country especially in Kenya. Land in Kenya was also a key reason for the struggle for independence and land issues remain politically sensitive and culturally complex. Until recently, Kenya has not had a single and clearly defined National Land Policy since independence. This, together with the existence of many land laws, some of which are incompatible, has resulted in a complex land management and administration system. The land question has manifested itself in many ways such as fragmentation, breakdown in land administration, disparities in land ownership and poverty. This has resulted in environmental, social, economic and political problems including deterioration in land quality, squatting and landlessness, disinheritance of some groups and individuals, urban squalor, under-utilization and abandonment of agricultural land, tenure insecurity and conflict. To address these problems, the Government embarked on the formulation of a National Land Policy (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 Sessional Paper No.3 of 2009 on The National Land Policy) through a widely consultative process with the aim of producing a policy whose vision is "To guide the country towards efficient, sustainable and

equitable use of land for prosperity and posterity". Questions concerning land tenure, property rights and land administration command pivotal positions in the country's social, economic, legal and political fabric as stated in key policy documents of the GoK such as Vision 2030.

During the policy formulation process, the Development Partners Group on Land (DPGL) worked with the ministry to develop road maps and funding scenarios for the Land Reform Support Program, including the land information management system program. The implementation of the National Land Policy (NLP) will be challenging. However, the fast tracking of reforms envisaged in the policy are expected to provide a platform for providing efficient and effective land administration and management systems which are integral to the attainment of peace and stability in the country (GOK, 2013). As Part of Land reform, the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development demolished walls and created open plan offices at Ministry Headquarters at Ardhi House. This enables employees to easily consult each other and serve the public without leaving the office, thus saving time. Employees no longer have to go from office to office to consult different officers on land issues. Land reform seeks to ensure efficient service delivery, access to land information and effective land management and administration for posterity and prosperity of all Kenyans (GOK, 2012).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The office environment to a large extent is a major determinant in employee performance in any organization. Creating a work environment which promotes wellbeing of employees and increase individual performance is viewed as a strategy for enhancing company efficiency and productivity. Employee's normally have expectation and will demand a workplace environment that facilitates them to perform their work optimally. The quality of work depends upon safe and healthy working conditions in determining employee's job behavior. The organizational climate is an important indicator of employee behavior as a combination of social and psychological factors. It is found that working conditions are attached with employees' job involvement and job satisfaction that ultimately leads to better performance of the employees (Scott *et al.*, 2000). It is reported that there is a positive correlation between perceived supervisor support and nurse occupation-related outcomes (Hall, 2007). Kazmi *et al.* (2008) examines the effects of stressful work environment on the performance of medical house officers. The results reveal an inverse relationship between job stress and job performance. High job stress in the house of officers results in low job performance. Similarly, it is reported that perceived adequacy or inadequacy of work environment, both physical and psycho-social, extends noticeable effect on employees' job satisfaction, performance and perception of effectiveness of an organization (Srivastava, 2008).

Various researchers have studied environment as a factor in the performance of employees in organizations. A study carried out by Waweru (2010), on the effect of internal and external environment on employee's retention highlighted that there many variables that affect the performance of employees at work place. The study also found out that the recognition of both environments contributed to an enhanced employee performance and recommended that inclusion of both systems be integrated for optimal performance. A study carried out by Leblebici (2012) on the effects of organisational climate and performance concluded that there is a consistent association between the two and that companies that performed above average showed higher values on climate dimensions than those performing below average. Eagly, (2005) on a comparative analysis of work life balance in service industry confirms that employees often find a conflict in balancing their job and other life responsibilities, such as family (work-family conflict) and outside activities. In the literature reviewed so far relate to

private organizations, however, the researcher is not aware of any study conducted in the public sector and featuring on the dimensions such as physical working conditions, social support and job characteristics. This study therefore aimed at investigating the relationship between workplace environment and employees performance in the ministry of Land, Housing and Urban development.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between workplace environment and employees' performance in the public sector, a case of Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development.

The specific objectives of this study were:

- i. To establish the influence of office design on employees performance in the public sector.
- ii. To establish influence of social support factors on employees performance in the public sector.
- iii. To establish the influence of job characteristics on employees performance in the public sector.
- iv. To find out the influence of employees health and safety on performance in the public sector.
- v. To establish the influence of workplace incentives on employees performance in the public sector.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Person- Environment (PE) fit Theory

The theory described here was initially proposed by French, Rodgers, and Cobb (1974). The theory behind person-environment fit is that everyone has a work environment with which they are most compatible. The idea of PE is grounded in Kurt Lewin's maxim, the behavior is a function of person and environment. Characteristics on the person side of the equation include interests, preferences, KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities), personality traits, values, and goals. The environmental factors may include such things as vocational norms, demands of the job, job characteristics, and organizational culture and values. The basic rationale of the theory is simple: if you work in an optimally compatible environment, all sorts of good things happen, such as improved work attitude, performance, and less stress. The theory behind person-environment fit is that everyone has a work environment with which they are most compatible. It is defined as the degree to which individual and environmental characteristics match (Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Person characteristics may include an individual's biological or psychological needs, values, goals, abilities, or personality, while environmental characteristics could include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, demands of a job or role, cultural values, or characteristics of other individuals and collectives in the person's social environment (French Caplan, & Harrison 1982). Due to its important implications in the workplace, person-environment fit has maintained a prominent position in Industrial and organizational psychology and related fields.

Person–environment fit can be understood as a specific type of person–situation interaction that involves the match between corresponding person and environment dimensions (Ostroff & Schulte, 2007). Even though person–situation interactions as they relate to fit have been discussed in the scientific literature for decades, the field has yet to reach consensus on how to conceptualize and operationalize person–environment fit. This is due partly to the fact that person–environment fit encompasses a number of subsets, such as person–supervisor fit and person–job fit, which are conceptually distinct from one another (Edwards & Shipp, 2007). Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that person–environment fit leads to positive outcomes, such as satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being (Ostroff & Schulte, 2007). This theory is relevant to this study since it recognizes the importance of both the person and environment in understanding the nature and consequences of stress. Person constructs relevant to stress research include locus of control, hardiness, and coping styles. The environment has been construed as stressful life events, daily hassles and chronic stressors such as role conflict and ambiguity, role overload and underload and job demands and decision latitude.

4.2 Fifty-Fifty Theory

Adair (2006) developed a new theory of motivation also named The Fifty – Fifty Rule. Its fundament is the intersection of the three circles. It was developed by John Adair as a motivational factor that could influence company performance. From his perception fifty percent of motivation comes from within a person and the remaining fifty percent comes from the environment, mainly from people around us. This rule is not used to declare the exact proportions, but it tries to explain that, fifty per cent of our motivation comes from within us and fifty per cent from an external influence, that is, from our environment, particularly from the people around us. These observations are indicative rather than mathematical and they may differ from person to person. Within these important external factors the nature and quality of the leadership present is essentially important. Hence the tough link between leadership and motivation becomes vital to determine employee’s motivation. The Fifty-Fifty rule does have the benefit of reminding leaders that they have a key role to play for the success or failure in the motivation of employees at work. Fortunately or unfortunately not all the cards are in their hands, for they are dealing with people who are self-motivating in various degree. These are the challenges that confront the HRM to galvanize employee motivation with the work environment. (Adair, 2007). This theory is relevant to this study since it recognizes the role of workplace environment as a source of employee motivation. He argued that motivation through rewards and other incentives are important in improving employee’s performance.

4.3 Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory is developed by Stevan Hobfoll (1989). This perspective bears marked similarity with the P–E fit model, specifically in that both approaches examine the interaction of the person and the environment, and the degree of correspondence between demands in the environment and the individual’s resources to deal with those demands. One key difference (outlined by Hobfoll, 2001) is that the P–E fit model focuses predominantly on people’s perceptions of fit, whereas COR theory incorporates more objective indicators of actual fit. In his overview of COR theory and its applications, Hobfoll indicated that 74 different types of resources have been identified through research. In a work context, for example, features such having autonomy in one’s job, the amount (and type) of feedback received on one’s job performance, and the level of rewards obtained for successful job performance, are all illustrations of environmental resources (Hakanen *et al.*, 2008).

Social support from work colleagues and organizational support for individuals (accommodating their needs) also represent major environmental resources, which can reduce stress and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006), as well as enhancing positive well-being (Luszczynska & Cieslak, 2005). As just mentioned, a key feature of COR theory is its simultaneous consideration of both environmental elements and the individual's cognitions. In this theory, these dimensions are given relatively equal weight in determining whether or not the person will experience conservation of resources. In contrast, COR theory delves into environmental characteristics that contribute to conservation of resources and, hence (according to Hobfoll), has more practical application. This theory is relevant to this study since it offer the potential to understand the role of organizational resources in the uptake of research evidence. Resource theories are based on the premise that a minimum resource threshold is necessary for performance, with increasing difficulty arising as demands increase and outweigh the available resource pool. It shows that resources are key determinants of performance.

4.4 Elton Mayo's Hawthorne effect Theory

Hawthorne set the individual in a social context, establishing that the performance of employees is influenced by their surroundings and by the people that they are working with as much as by their own innate abilities. The original purpose of the experiments was to study the effects of physical conditions on productivity and performance. In addition, the aptitudes of individuals are imperfect predictors of job performance but the amount produced is strongly influenced by social factors. The studies also showed that the relations that supervisors develop with workers tend to influence the manner in which the workers carry out directives (Mayo, 1987). The theory is relevant to this study since it helps identify the physical environmental conditions in the environments which relate with employees' performance. The work of Elton Mayo is famously known as the 'Hawthorne effect'. It was a series of studies on the productivity of workers in the American western electric company in Chicago. He made some illumination experiments, introduced breaks in between the work performance and also introduced refreshments during the pauses. On the basis of this he drew the conclusions that motivation was a very complicated subject. It was not only about pay, but work condition and moral as well as including psychological and social factors too. Although this research has been criticized, the main conclusions drawn were: People are motivated by more than pay and conditions. The need for recognition and a sense of belongings are very important and that attitudes towards work are strongly influenced by the group. This theory is important in this study because it illustrated other motivator to employee performance such as working conditions and social support in an organization.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework below illustrates the relationship between the independent variables namely; (office design, social support, job characteristics, employee safety and health as well as workplace incentives) and the dependent variable that is employee performance.

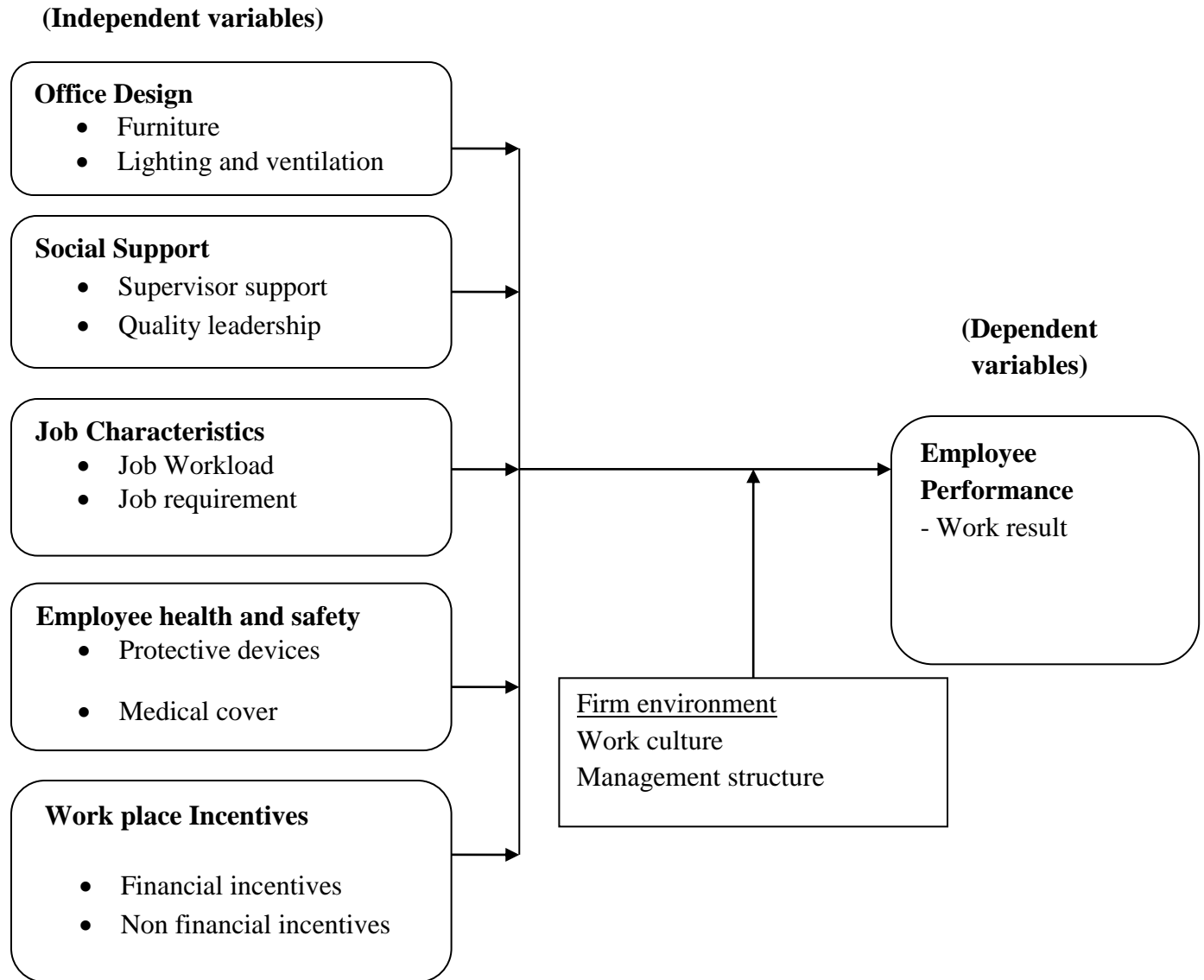


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a case study. A case study is considered as the appropriate research design since it is a more appropriate strategy for answering research questions which ask ‘how and ‘why’ and which do not require control over the events (Kothari, 2000). This is because such questions deal with operational links that would need to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence. The target population included all 950 employees of Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development in head office Nairobi. This involves all levels of management i.e. senior, middle and low level management staff. Stratified sampling technique was used where all the employees were classified into three categories such as senior level, middle level and low level management. Simple random sampling method was used to pick the actual respondents from each level of management. A 10% sample size was used for study making a 95 respondents.

The researcher used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaire while secondary data was collected from published reports and other documents. Primary data was collected from Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban development employees. The researcher selected a pilot group of 10 individuals from the target population and administered a questionnaire to test the reliability of the research instrument. The clarity of the research instruments to the respondents was established so as to enhance the instrument's reliability. The pilot study enabled the researcher to identify items that required modification. Inferential statistics such as regression and correlation was used to analyze the qualitative data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software was used for analysis to generate data array that was used for subsequent analysis of the data. SPSS has descriptive statistics features that assist in variable response comparison and give clear indications of response frequencies. The content analysis was used to analyze the respondents' views about work place environment in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development.

7. STUDY FINDINGS

Inferential statistics was used to infer from these sample data what the population might think or to make judgments of the probability that an observed difference between groups is a dependable one or one that might have happened by chance in this study. Linear regression analysis was used to find the relationship between office design, social support, job characteristics, employee health and safety, as well as employee incentives.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.860	0.794	0.7800	.212

The two coefficient of determination (R^2) and correlation coefficient (R) shows the degree of association or the relationship between the study variables. The model summary shows there was a positive relationship between the study variables (R at 0.860). It shows that there exist a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. An R-square value of 0.794 was established and adjusted to 0.7800. R square (R^2) is a coefficient of determination which can be used interpret that 78.0% of employee performance in public sector is explained by the independent variable (office design, social support factors, job characteristics, and employee health and safety and workplace incentives). While, 22% is unexplained by these factors, meaning 22% of the employee performance is brought about by factors not captured in the objectives.

To test the significance of the regression model, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	113.0145	15	7.5343	12.478	.002 ^b
Residual	174.1209	80	2.1765		

Total 287.1354 95

From the ANOVA statistics in table 2, the significance value was 0.002 which is less than 0.05, an indication that the model was statistically significant. The calculated statistical F is greater than the critical value (1.864 <12.478) an indication that independent variables in the study (workplace environments) were significantly importance in improving employees performance in public sector in Kenya.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	7.125	.160		.013
Office design	0.623	.058	0.615	.002
Social support	0.832	.523	0.712	.000
Job characteristics	0.642	.377	0.553	.004
Employee health and safety	0.734	.433	0.679	.000
Workplace incentives	0.788	.519	0.692	.001

From the table 3 the established regression equation is; $Y_0 = 7.125 + 0.623X_1 + 0.832X_2 + 0.642X_3 + 0.734X_4 + 0.788X_5 + e$, Where $X_1 =$ Office design, $X_2 =$ Social support, $X_3 =$ Job characteristics, $X_4 =$ Employee health and safety, $X_5 =$ Workplace incentives. According to the regression model established, taking all factors constant employee performance will be 7.125. The table also shows that taking all other independent variables at zero, an improvement in the office design would result to a 0.623 increase in employee performance. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between office design and employee performance. The results are in agreement with Bornstein (2007) states that in organizations where employees are exposed to stressful working conditions, productivity are negatively influenced and that there is a negative impact on the delivery of service. On the other hand, if working conditions are good, productivity increases and there is a positive impact on the delivery of service. He shows that when the air-conditioning system was introduced, employees feel that their work space becomes more comfortable and the productivity tends to increase because they can concentrate on their work. This statement explains that when an employee feels comfortable with the workplace environment, things that can distract their work can be reduced and they can perform better.

The findings shows that a unit increases in social support factors would lead to a 0.832 improvement in employee performance. This indicates a strong positive relationship between social support and employee performance. The findings agree with Arnold, (2007), social support encourages positive relations and increases self-confidence of the employees and in return improves performance (Arnold, 2007). Immediate supervisors act as advocate for

employees, facilitates the allocation resources required by the employees for them to be able to do a good job and providing positive encouragement for a job well done.

There was a moderate positive relationship between job characteristics and employee performance. The model shows that a unit change in job characteristics would lead to a 0.642 increase on employee performance. This is in agreement with Gomes, (2010). That a well job description helps to ensure effective performance and provides a clear guide to all that are involved about the position, its requirements and expected outcomes. The regression model further shows that a unit improvement in employee health and safety would lead to a 0.734 increase on employee performance. This indicates a strong positive relationship between employee health and employee performance. The results are in agreement with oxenburgh et al., (2004), who argued that health and safety are inevitable aspect of production because an employee will perform his duties well when he/she is in good health and is sure of a safe working condition. This boils to the fact that a worker will perform his duties to the fullest only when he is sure that even when an accident occurs he will be taken good care of by the organization. An increase in workplace incentive would lead to a 0.788 increase on employee performance. This illustrates a strong positive relationship between workplace incentives and employee performance. According to Gielen, *et al.*, (2009). Payment could encourage employees work harder, and perform better to increase productivity of each employee and the whole organization.

8. CONCLUSION

The study was aimed at evaluating the effects of workplace environment on employee performance in public sector in Kenya. The results are concluded based on five issues as mentioned in the research objectives namely office design, social support factors, job characteristics, employees health and safety and workplace incentives. From the findings of this study, office design greatly contributes to the employee performance. Therefore the study concluded that management must strive to provide conducive office conditions for work. There should be clean and enough working space for every employee with good lighting and temperatures. The study further conclude that employees should be provided with comfortable furniture and modern working machines as doing so will lead to faster and high quality work performance. The finding shows a strong positive relationship between social support and employee performance in public sector in Kenya. Workplace relations are argued to be most effective in creating an enabling and conducive working place. The study therefore concludes that management should strive to create a good worker- supervisors relationship, good coworkers relationship. There should be employee involvement when making important decision as this create a sense of ownership in the organization's operations. There should also be an extent of delegation of authority when one is performing a role in the organization. The findings shows a positive relationship between job characteristics and employee performance in public sector. The study concludes that job design should always be conducted become placement to identify the right skills for the job. Job recruitment should be carried out fairly and skillfully to select the right person for the right job, job training should be given occasionally to equip the employee with the current knowledge and skills required to perform the duties in the organization. The study also concludes that job security and autonomy is important aspects of job performance and therefore managers should it to their juniors.

Based on the findings employee health and safety has a strong relationship with employees performance. The study concludes that management should prioritize employee health and safety

in their organizations. Employee should be given protective equipment such as gloves and helmet to protect themselves from and hazardous situations. Management should continuously draft policies that are aimed at promoting employees health such as medical cares and regular checkups. This will ensure continuous supply of human resources which is a key performance component in the organization. Work incentives is another key component in determining the employee performance as shown by the strong positive relationship in the regression analysis. The study concludes that both financial and non-financial incentives are important in motivating the employee performance. Employee recognition and financial incentives such as salary were rated highly by the respondents of the study. The study therefore concluded that management should reward their employee for the good performance by awarding good salaries, bonuses and other non-financial incentives such as recognition.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommend that management should set aside enough resource for the office physical conditions. Employee should be involved in designing their best work place. This will ensure their views are accommodated in the design. Office furniture should comfortable and the office machines should appropriate for the duties to be carried out. Modern machines can be considered for efficiency and cost management in the office work. Social support factors are important aspects of employee performance, the study recommend that the management keep abreast of the existing relationship in the organization to ensure health relationships are maintained between coworker and supervisors. Management should come up with activities such as team building and exchange programs to enhance team work and friendly relationships. Social welfares should also be encouraged to take care of the social needs of the employees as the social stability would increase employee performance.

Job characteristics affect employee performance, the study therefore conclude that every job should well design, job requirements must be well stipulated to ensures that employee know what is expected of them from every duty. Role definition will also help avoid job overlaps. Job authority should accompany any job to ensure that an employee is able to accomplish the required outcomes of the role. On employee health and safety, the study recommend that health and safety of the employees to be responsibility of both the management and employees. Employee should be sensitized on the importance of their health and that of working in a safe workplace. The study further recommend that management continuously implements policies and programmes that promote health and safety in their organization.

On workplace incentives, the study recommends that the management should offer both financial and non-financial incentives towards improving the employee job performance. The study recommends for various methods of financial compensation such as performance based pay, bonuses and shares allocation. The management should also device some policies to commensurate the work done with the amount of compensation. The study recommend increase use of non-financial incentives such as offering chances of quick promotion, opportunity for training, security of service as well as personal reward. This incentives can increase production and efficiency in the performance of the organization.

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