

Effect of Leadership Commitment on Employee Performance in County Government in Kenya: A Case of Nairobi City County

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ABSTRACT

Development to achieve good performance can be achieved because the interconnectedness and mutual support between leaders and subordinates who committed the organization to carry out the performance that can be expected in achieving the goal. Therefore, to achieve good performance required leadership behaviors which are committed to forming job satisfaction. However, the County governments in Kenya face problems due to poor innovation, low productivity, and inability to meet performance targets. This study investigated the influence of leadership commitment on employee performance in County governments in Kenya. The specific objectives were to examine the influence of organizational equity, participatory management, training and development and communication on employee performance. The study anchored by four theories namely; Perceptual Control Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, Social Cognitive Theory and Attribution Theory. This research study used descriptive design. The target population was 197 employees. Stratified random sampling design was used in the study. The data collection instrument was questionnaire. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and presented in tables, charts and graphs. The qualitative data from the open ended questionnaires was analyzed using content analysis technique and reported in narrative form. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. The study established leadership commitment had a positive significant effect on employee performance in County governments in Kenya. The study concludes that organizational equity plays a great role in enhancing employee's performance in the work place and an employee feels safe and secured in the workplace if equity is at play. The County governments in Kenya practice participatory management through various ways in which employees in the County are involved in decision making and these include individuals being involved as experts in a given field, as supervisors, as representatives of unions, as heads of departments among others. County governments in Kenya do carry out training and development to a reasonable extent, and this improves their performance significantly. Employees of County governments in Kenya have better communication methods hence high motivation levels and consequently high performance. The study recommends that County governments in Kenya should prioritize organizational equity in order to ensure that employees perceive even and fair treatment in the work place. The methods of involvement should be expanded to give chance to all the stakeholders to participate and contribute to the shaping of the Counties through decision making. The County governments should consider employee training and development as a continuous process for organizational development. The County government management needs to communicate with employees regularly to get feedback and offer suggestions in other to prevent confusion about future job assignments.

Key Words: *Leadership Commitment, Employee Performance, County Government in Kenya, Nairobi City County*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the unpredictable business environment and intense business competition, the companies are required to reach certain standards by improving their performance to align with such great demands; otherwise, a lot of problems will surface, including running the risk to close down the business (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2014). This performance relates to the firm or individual level which sees the human resource becoming the most determining factor to achieve the organizations' objectives. Haghighi (2015) human resources are vital for organizational excellence and they act as the main factor for achieving anticipated organizational objectives. DeConinck and Bachmann (2014) indicates that organization must provide situations that employee would be able to criticize to improve conditions without fearing from the negative reaction of higher supervisor and if they see that positive aspects are more important than negative ones, then in role performance will improve and higher job satisfaction will be obtained. According to Fletcher and Richard (2012) managers of organization should clarify about their own and employee tasks to attract their confidence, thus employee will immigrate them in behavior and do their job properly with maximum effort and feel success. Also managers must consider their employee and their comfort and provide them good work situation so that problems solved creatively.

Leadership, according to Michael (2004), is about listening to people, supporting and encouraging them and involving them in the decision-making and problem-solving process. It is about building teams and developing their ability to make skillful decisions. Palin (2011) indicates that, the leaders who are high performing, are fully committed to have high standards and clear expectations for all their employees within the organization. The leaders are committed to ensuring that appropriate workplace behaviors and conduct are well communicated and selected into the organization during properly executed hiring processes. Strong leaders make sound, fair, and decisive decision about negative employment matters, and move on. The employees are regarded as the major business resources that facilitate the daily activities and operations of an organisation (Liao, Lu, Huang & Chiang, 2012). Mahajan and Benson (2013) define job equity as employee's perceptions of just and unjust treatment as it relates to his/her involvement in the workplace. Equity therefore, is one of the main factors that influence employee performance in the workplace; employees evaluate their contributions to the organization in form of input in relations to the reward they receive as output thereby estimating it based on perceived fairness or unfairness. Also, according to Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) workers always form an impression on whether they are given fair treatment in their work place or otherwise e, which impact greatly on their level of performance.

Kahuthu (2013) observe that participation of employee in decision making crystallizes the notion of industrial democracy and expresses the employee desire to bind into a team working together towards a common objective. Armstrong (2010) defined employee involvement as the use of one or more methods which are designed to obtain a higher degree of employee commitment to the success of the organization and to enable them to participate and contribute to the decision making process on matters that affect them. It is a concept of recognition that has great-untapped potentials, but that management retain the right to manage. All organizations, both public and private entities rely on some form of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or inform their target audience of the mission and vision of their entity. Employee mostly hypes performance at the work place when effective communication is at its ultimate. For instance, when the information about an organization's policies and procedures are at its

optimum level with openness and accuracy; and also when the information provided is adequate, factual and has good feedback (Kacmar et al., 2013; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

According to Ivancevich (2010), training and development is a process that attempts to provide employees with information, skills and understanding of the organization and its goals. Additionally training and development aids an employee to continue to make the necessary positive contribution to the success of employing organization in terms of his / her good performance on the job. Heathfield (2012) observe that the right employee training, development and education at the right time, provides big payoffs for the organization in increase productivity, knowledge, loyalty and contribution. Employee performance includes executing defined duties, meeting deadlines, employee competency, and effectiveness and efficiency in doing work (Saks, 2015). Various organizations need strong leadership styles that stimulate the employee performance. According to Adair (2012) leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behavior and work of others toward the accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation. Leadership is an ability of a manager to induce the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal. Leaders are required to develop the future vision, and to motivate the organizational members to want to achieve the visions and to improve the performance.

Performance of an employee on a given job or task is strategic edifice of a business as a result, elements that give rise to enriched performance must be dissected in a more critical dimension by the establishments for success, advancement and growth (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009). Performance and productivity of an employee is seen an issue of momentous vitality for employers, managers and the entirety of an organisations as well (Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, 2011). Kelidbari, Dizgah and Yusefi (2011) are also of the opinion that employee performance embodies the all-encompassing belief of the personnel in relation their conduct and aids in the direction of the achievement of the organization. Alagarajal and Shuck (2015) disclose that employee performance can be measured by means of regular training and improvement. In addition, Alagarajal and Shuck (2015) take on measures of employee performance as core job performance, that includes in-role performance, security performance, and inventiveness, trailed by citizenship performance, branded into equally targets-specific and wide-ranging organizational citizenship. Therefore, Performance of an employee gives room for innovativeness among employees and general firm's performance and innovativeness.

Ahmad and Shahzad (2011) argued that seeming performance of an employee expresses the entire conviction of an employee in regards to the actions and input to the attainment of the organisations goals and mission. They further mentioned that practices of compensation, evaluation of performance and practices concerning promotion of and employee are the benchmark for performance of a worker. So also, Anitha (2013) stated that performance of an employee is a gauge or pointer of monetary or other result of the employee that has undeviating relationship with organisation performance and accomplishment as well. Anitha, (2013) additionally disclose that atmosphere at which employee perform task and other schedules, relationship with bosses, co-employee relationship and that of team, compensation procedure, and engagement of an employee are determining factors for performance.

The County Government Act 2012 specifies key plans that each County is expected to generate and these are; County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), County Sectoral Plans, County Spatial Plans, County Urban Areas and Cities Plans, and County Performance Management Plans. These plans are interrelated as they deal with different aspects of development and it is

that Annual budgets are to be based on these approved plans. The county government consists of a county assembly and a county executive. Every county government is required to decentralize its functions and the provision of its services to the extent that it is efficient and practicable to do so. The County assembly constitutes the legislative organ of government while the County executive is representative of the Executive arm of government within the County government. Nairobi City County is an attractive County for residents, workers and investors due its strategic location in the region. It has attractive physical, social and economic features that offer promising opportunities for socio-economic development for all. The mandate of Nairobi City County is to provide and manage basic social and physical infrastructure services to the residents of Nairobi. The Nairobi County's vision is to be recognized as one of the most attractive cities of the world and its mission is to facilitate coordinated development and improved service delivery to stimulate economic activity, high quality of life and become one of the most attractive cities of the world (Ayisi, 2015).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employee job performance being one of the most important factors within public and private sectors analytics for maintaining and increasing productivity, is operationally noted by Newton (2007) as the extent to which an individual completes the duties that are required in order to occupy a given position, which he or she assumes within an organization. For effectiveness in ensuring successful employee job performance, leadership has the most common responsibilities of committing themselves in supervision whereby they delegate work, give information or advise subordinates. Organizations today face many conflicting problems that must be balanced in order to compete successfully in the world economy. They must continually improve performance by reducing costs, innovating processes (Boseman, 2008). As the managers become more committed to the organization and also more likely to develop their employees. County governments like any other organizations are also faced with similar challenges in employee management since devolution is still a new concept of governance in Kenya. The manner in which employees were managed by various local authorities before devolution differs from the devolved system currently in place. This is because the governance challenges then were few as most of the functions were carried out by the National government (Kihara, Bwisa & Kihoro, 2016). Previous studies that have been done include; Pathirage, Jayawardena and Rajapaksha (2012) who did a study on the impact of management support for team performance in Sri Lank focusing on apparel industry. Iqbal, Anwar and Haider (2015) did a study on effect of leadership style on employee performance in Arabia. Kaiman (2013) did a study on Leadership behavior and commitment and how it affects employee job satisfaction and employee performance on department of population and civil registration. Kagwiria (2016) did a study on the influence of Leadership on Employee Productivity at KCB Bank Kenya Limited, Nairobi Region Branches. Based on the above studies, none of the studies focused on County governments. It is due this regard that this study sought to investigate on the influence of leadership commitment on employee performance in County governments of Kenya.

3. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study was to determine the influence of leadership commitment on employee performance in County Governments of Kenya: A case of Nairobi City County.

Specific objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of organizational equity on employee performance in County Governments in Kenya.
- ii. To establish the influence of participatory management on employee performance in County Governments in Kenya.
- iii. To examine the influence of training and development on employee performance in County Governments in Kenya.
- iv. To identify the influence of communication on employee performance in County Governments in Kenya

4. THEORETICAL REVIEW

4.1 Perceptual Control Theory (PCT)

Perceptual Control Theory (PCT) was proposed by Bourbon (1995). This theory proposes a specific mechanism whose output behaviors serve to keep an individual's myriad of controlled perceptions near internally determined reference levels. In this paper I offer a synopsis of perceptual control theory. At the heart of perceptual control theory is the idea that human beings are essentially intricate control mechanisms that function to keep certain intrinsic variables within survivable limits (Ashby, 1952). Perceptual Control Theory points out that behavior is the process by which we control our perceptions. This means that we do things to alter our perceptions, and we do so specifically to make the state of those perceptions conform to reference conditions such as goals and other preferred states that we have either chosen, developed, or are intrinsic to our existence (Powers, 2009). According to Carey (2008) the PCT model indicates functions, processes, and neural signals that influence behavior. Presumably, the components and relationships shown are causal. They influence one another. In other words, the model and related PCT theory indicate important determinants of behavior. And so, if we seek to influence or change behavior, we apparently need to somehow change one or more of those determinants of behavior. This theory was used in the study to show that in order to enhance effectiveness of employee job performance in the organization, it is vital to have the management control the perceptual behavior of employees in order to have them learn what management expects of them regarding performance.

4.2 Goal-Setting Theory

Goal setting theory was proposed by Lee, Locke and Latham (1989). It is based on hundreds of empirical studies. Ryan's advice to focus on the immediate causes of human action has proven to be sound. Goal setting effects are very reliable; failures to replicate are usually due to errors such as: not matching the goal to the performance measure, not providing feedback, not getting goal commitment, not measuring the person's personal (self-set) goals, lack of task knowledge, setting an outcome goal when a learning goal was required, or failure to include a sufficient range of goal difficulty levels (Locke & Latham, 2000b). The concept of self-efficacy ties in with goal setting theory in various ways. When goals are self-set, people with higher efficacy set higher goals than people with lower efficacy. They also are more committed to assigned goals, use better task strategies to attain goals, and respond more positively to negative feedback than people with low efficacy.

Goals affect performance through four mechanisms. First, goals serve a directive function; they direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities. This effect occurs both cognitively and behaviorally. For example, Rothkopf &

Billington (2008) found that students with specific learning goals paid attention to and learned goal-relevant prose passages better than goal-irrelevant passages. Locke and Bryan (2010) observed that people given feedback about multiple aspects of their performance on an automobile-driving task improved their performance on those dimensions for which they had goals, but not so for other dimensions. The goal-performance relationship is strongest when people are committed to their goals. The ultimate proof of commitment is action. Nevertheless, it is often useful to measure commitment before the fact (Seijts & Latham, 2000b). Commitment is most important and relevant when goals are difficult (Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999), because hard goals may require high effort and are associated with lower chances of success than easy goals (Erez & Zidon, 2009). This theory was relevant to the study because it shows that for the success of the organizational outcomes the leadership should be committed in setting up goals which will help to ensure successful employee job performance.

4.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was advocated by Bandura (1986). According to Bandura (1986) social cognitive theory human behavior is extensively motivated and regulated by the ongoing exercise of self-influence. The major self-regulative mechanism operates through three principal subfunctions. These include self-monitoring of one's behavior, its determinants, and its effects; judgment of one's behavior in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances; and affective self-reaction. Self-regulation also encompasses the self-efficacy mechanism, which plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency by its strong impact on thought, affect, motivation, and action. Social cognitive theory explains psychosocial functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation. In this causal model, behaviour, cognitive and other personal factors and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally. For employees to perform effectively, it is very crucial for leaders to commit themselves in performing their duties better in a manner that the employees can copy their doing which will determine the end results or the performance of the employees.

4.4 Attribution Theory

Psychologist Fritz Heider (1896–1988) first developed attribution theory in his 1958 book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. Heider proposed that what people perceived and believed about what they saw dictated how they would act, even if their beliefs about what they perceived were invalid. According to Kelley (2005) attribution theory is intended to help a person understand the causes of human behavior, be it their own or someone else's. The basis of attribution theory is that people want to know the reasons for the actions that they and others take; they want to attribute causes to behaviors they see rather than assuming that these behaviors are random. This allows people to assume some feeling of control over their own behaviors and over situations. The theory was relevant to the study because Attributions also may influence employee motivation. Employees who perceive the cause of their success to be outside of their control may be reluctant to attempt new tasks and may lose motivation to perform well in the workplace. Conversely, employees who attribute their success to themselves are more likely to have high motivation for work. Thus, understanding attributions that people make can have a strong effect on both employee performance and managerial effectiveness.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables

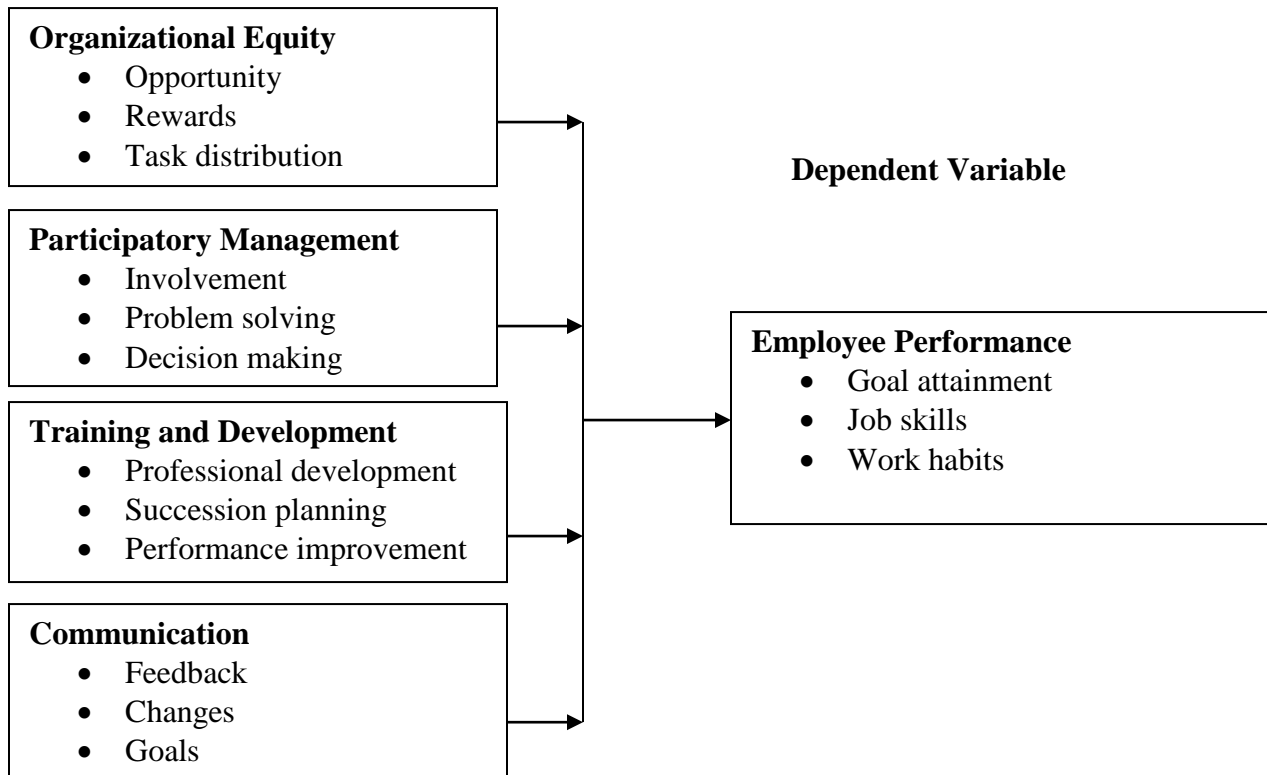


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 shows a conceptual framework of the study which shows how variables relate to each other. The independent variables are organizational equity, participatory management, training and development and communication and the dependent variable is employee performance.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study used descriptive design to investigate the effects of leadership commitment on employee job performance in Nairobi City County. At the Nairobi City County there are many workers but the researcher targets the Human Resource Department (HRM) who involved the top level management, middle level management and finally the support Staff. The target population was 197 employees as per Human Resource Management of Nairobi City County, Kenya report of 2017. The stratified random sampling method was best suited in this research because the population consists of different people who work for the Nairobi City County in various departments, which are similar in all counties countywide. Stratified random sampling was appropriate because it represent not only the overall population but also the key sub groups of the population. The method was best because it minimizes bias. The data collection instrument was questionnaire. Questionnaire was chosen because the targeted population is considered literate which minimizes the interpretation of the questions for their understanding to capture reliable information. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and presented in tables, charts and graphs using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The qualitative data from the open ended questionnaires was analysed using content analysis technique and reported in narrative form. The study used

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the level of significant of the variables on the dependent variable at 95% confidence level.

7. DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis so as to test relationship among independent variables and dependent variable. The researcher applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) statistics 17.0 to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.403 ^a	.612	.751	.579	.162	2.273	4	47	.001 ^a

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication, Training and Development, Participatory Management, Organizational Equity

Coefficient of determination explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable that is explained by all the four independent variables. The four independent variables that were studied, explain only 75.1% of the employee performance in County governments as indicated by adjusted R squared. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute 24.9% of the employee performance in County governments in Kenya.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.052	4	.763	2.273	.001 ^a
	Residual	15.775	47	.336		
	Total	18.827	51			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication, Training and Development, Participatory Management, Organizational Equity

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The significance value is 0.001^a which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significance in predicting how various factors affect the employee performance in County governments in Kenya. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 0.763. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 2.273), this shows that the overall model was significant. The relationship ($p < 0.05$) indicated a linear relationship among the variables under the study meaning there was 95% chance that the relationship among the variables was not due to chance.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	0.4151	.576		7.206	.000	2.992	5.311
Organizational Equity	.539	.073	4.073	2.538	.003	.185	.107
Participatory Management	.619	.057	1.002	4.017	.007	.115	.113
Training and Development	.634	.070	2.065	2.482	.002	.175	.107
Communication	.700	.059	3.387	2.879	.006	.051	.287

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

As per the SPSS generated table above, the equation ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$) becomes: $Y = 0.4151 + 0.539 X_1 + 0.700 X_3 + 0.634 X_3 + 0.619X_4$ Where Y= Employee Performance, X_1 = Organizational Equity, X_2 = Participatory Management, X_3 = Training and Development, X_4 = Communication.

According to the regression equation established, taking all the independent variables into constant at zero, employee performance in County governments in Kenya will be 41.51%. The data findings analyzed also showed that all the independent variables had a positive and significant effect on the employee performance in County governments in Kenya as indicated by beta values. The relationships ($p < 0.05$) are all significant with organizational equity ($\beta=4.073$, $p < 0.05$), participatory management ($\beta=1.002$, $p < 0.05$), training and development ($\beta= 2.065$, $p < 0.05$), communication ($t= 3.387$, $p < 0.05$) and communication was found to be the most (70.0%) significant among the other three variables studied. Kahuthu (2013) observe that participation of employee in decision making crystallizes the notion of industrial democracy and expresses the employee desire to bind into a team working together towards a common objective. According to Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) workers always form an impression on whether they are given fair treatment in their work place or otherwise e, which impact greatly on their level of performance. Heathfield (2012) observe that the right employee training, development and education at the right time, provides big payoffs for the organization in increase productivity, knowledge, loyalty and contribution. Neves and Eisenberger (2012) indicates that all organizations, both public and private entities rely on some form of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or inform their target audience of the mission and vision of their entity.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Organizational equity plays a great role in enhancing employee's performance in the work place. An employee feels safe and secured in the workplace if equity is at play. On the other hand inequity in an organisation can hinder employee performance and drastically demoralises employees that perceive inequity. Organizational equity is essential for employee performance

considering the fact that it has an impact on the behaviour of individual to an extent that it determines what result on higher employee performance or on the other hand decreased performance. The County governments in Kenya practice participatory management through various ways in which employees in the County are involved in decision making and these include individuals being involved as experts in a given field, as supervisors, as representatives of unions, as heads of departments among others. Employees are also let to participate in the implementation of the decisions and policies to enable the county to meet the stated objectives thus improving performance of employees.

County governments do carry out training and development to a reasonable extent, and this improves their performance significantly. Training and developing the workforce is inevitable for all the organizations. Employees' work contribution was greatly improved due to the training methods and tools used by the Counties. Thus, it led to a positive impact on employee' performance and an improvement in their skills and job efficiency. Employees are motivated through the roles that communication plays thus translating this motivation into job satisfaction. Thus employees of County governments in Kenya have better communication methods hence high motivation levels and consequently high performance. Communication programs that have been put in place and employees get enough information to accomplish their tasks and receive feedback from managers to improve their performances.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

County governments in Kenya should prioritize organizational equity in order to ensure that employees perceive even and fair treatment in the work place. By implication employee performance can be boosted if justice and equity is at play at all levels of organization. The Counties should ensure that equity and fairness is always at play in all levels of decision making, thereby making the employee safe and secured, which result in higher performance and productivity. The methods of involvement should be expanded to give chance to all the stakeholders to participate and contribute to the shaping of the Counties through decision making. It is therefore recommended that suggestion box be put in place where staff and other stakeholders can give their suggestion. A committee should critically analyze the suggestions so obtained and a feedback system and a feedback system also be put in place to evaluate the system.

The County governments should consider employee training and development as a continuous process for organizational development. Organizational career planning involves matching an individual's career aspirations with the opportunities available within the organization. Employee development and succession planning will also play a great role. Career progressions projection plans and training and development projections should be made available to each employee. The County government management needs to communicate with employees regularly to get feedback and offer suggestions in other to prevent confusion about future job assignments. This will help improve workers performance and organizational productivity. In addition, top managers should communicate directly with their subordinates on issues of importance. The Counties should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium to improve workers commitment.

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