

Influence Of Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance: A Case Study of The County Government of Kakamega, Kenya

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Abstract- Employee engagement has emerged as a crucial factor influencing organizational performance, particularly in the public sector. This study examines the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega, Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, targeting a population of 2,913 employees. A sample of 352 employees was selected using stratified random sampling, and data was collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Employee engagement was found to be a significant predictor of organizational performance ($\beta = 0.64, p < 0.001$), even after controlling for demographic factors. The study highlights the importance of fostering employee engagement to enhance organizational performance in the public sector and provides recommendations for the County Government of Kakamega to improve engagement levels and address areas of concern. Future research could explore specific job resources and demands influencing engagement in the context of county governments in Kenya and employ qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into employees' experiences.

Indexed Terms- Employee Engagement, Organizational Performance, County Government

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational performance in recent years. Engaged employees are more committed, motivated, and productive, contributing to improved organizational outcomes (Saks, 2006). In the public sector, employee engagement is particularly important as it directly impacts the quality of services delivered

to citizens (Agyemang & Ofei, 2013). The County Government of Kakamega, one of the 47 counties in Kenya established after the devolution of power in 2010, is responsible for providing various services to its residents (County Government of Kakamega, 2021). Ensuring high levels of employee engagement within the county government is crucial for achieving optimal organizational performance and effectively serving the public.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite the recognized importance of employee engagement, the County Government of Kakamega faces challenges in fostering high levels of engagement among its workforce. The County Government Performance Review Report (CBIRR) (Feb, 2023) indicates that the county government has not been performing optimally in terms of productivity and implementation of activities compared to its allocated budget and revenue collection. This suboptimal performance may be attributed to various factors, including low employee engagement. There is a need to investigate the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance within the County Government of Kakamega to develop strategies for enhancing engagement and, consequently, improving organizational outcomes.

1.3 Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega, Kenya. Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Assess the level of employee engagement in the County Government of Kakamega.
- ii. Determine the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega.

- iii. Identify factors influencing employee engagement in the County Government of Kakamega.
- iv. Propose strategies for enhancing employee engagement and organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on employee engagement and its impact on organizational performance in the public sector, particularly in the context of county governments in Kenya. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, county government leaders, and human resource practitioners in developing strategies to foster employee engagement and improve organizational performance. By identifying factors influencing engagement and proposing targeted interventions, the study will help the County Government of Kakamega optimize its workforce and better serve its constituents. Moreover, the study's recommendations may be applicable to other county governments facing similar challenges, contributing to the overall improvement of public sector performance in Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the study

The study focuses on the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance within the County Government of Kakamega, Kenya. It targets employees across various departments and levels within the county government. The study primarily relies on primary data collected through questionnaires administered to a sample of employees. The research is cross-sectional, providing a snapshot of the current state of employee engagement and its relationship with organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study draws upon two key theories to understand the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) postulates that human motivation is driven by a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic physiological needs to higher-order needs such as self-actualization.

In the context of employee engagement, this theory suggests that employees are more likely to be engaged when their basic needs (e.g., job security, fair compensation) are met, and they have opportunities for growth, recognition, and self-fulfillment in their work (Fallatah & Syed, 2017).

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that individuals have three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are satisfied, individuals are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and experience well-being. In the workplace, SDT suggests that employees are more engaged when they have a sense of autonomy in their work, feel competent in their roles, and have positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

2.2 Empirical literature review

2.2.1 Employee engagement and organizational performance

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. Harter et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 7,939 business units across 36 companies and found a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and various performance outcomes, including productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Saks (2006) found that employee engagement was positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior, which contribute to overall organizational performance.

In the public sector context, Agyemang and Ofei (2013) investigated the impact of employee engagement on the performance of public sector organizations in Ghana. They found that engaged employees demonstrated higher levels of commitment, job satisfaction, and productivity, leading to improved organizational performance. These findings highlight the importance of fostering employee engagement in the public sector to enhance service delivery and organizational effectiveness.

2.2.2 Factors influencing employee engagement

Various factors have been identified as influencing employee engagement. Anitha (2014) found that leadership, team and co-worker relationships, training

and career development, compensation, and organizational policies significantly impacted employee engagement. Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) proposed the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that job resources (e.g., autonomy, supervisory support, feedback) and personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism) foster engagement, while job demands (e.g., workload, emotional demands) can lead to disengagement if not adequately balanced with resources.

2.2.3 Conceptual framework

Based on the theoretical and empirical literature review, a conceptual framework can be developed to illustrate the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega. The framework would include employee engagement as the independent variable, organizational performance as the dependent variable, and factors influencing engagement (e.g., leadership, training and development, compensation, organizational culture) as moderating or mediating variables.

2.2.4 Research gaps

While there is extensive research on employee engagement and its impact on organizational performance in the private sector, fewer studies have focused on the public sector, particularly in the context of county governments in Kenya. Additionally, there is a need for more research on the specific factors influencing engagement in the public sector and how these factors may differ from those in the private sector. This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega and identifying context-specific factors that impact engagement in this setting.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research aims to provide an accurate and systematic description of a phenomenon, situation, or population (Kothari, 2004). This design is appropriate for the study as it allows for the collection of quantitative data on employee engagement and

organizational performance from a large sample of employees in the County Government of Kakamega. The study is cross-sectional, collecting data at a single point in time to provide a snapshot of the current state of employee engagement and its relationship with organizational performance.

3.2 Target population

The target population for this study consists of all employees working in the County Government of Kakamega. According to the County Government of Kakamega (2022), there are approximately 2,913 employees across various departments, including Finance and Economic Planning, Public Service Administration, Health Services, Roads, Energy and Public Works, Education, Science and Technology, and others.

3.3 Sampling technique and sample size

The study employs stratified random sampling to ensure proportionate representation of employees from different departments within the County Government of Kakamega. First, the population is divided into strata based on the departments. Then, a simple random sample is drawn from each stratum to select participants for the study. The sample size is determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (2,913)

e = level of precision (0.05)

Applying the formula:

$$n = 2,913 / (1 + 2,913(0.05)^2) = 352$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 352 employees.

3.4 Data collection methods and instruments

Primary data is collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of three sections: (1) demographic information, (2) employee engagement, and (3) organizational performance. The employee engagement section adapts items from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002), while the organizational performance section includes items related to productivity, service quality, and goal attainment. The questionnaire uses a 5-point

Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to measure responses. The questionnaire is piloted with a sample of 30 employees to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability of the instrument.

3.5 Data analysis techniques

The collected data is analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, are used to summarize demographic information and responses to employee engagement and organizational performance items. Inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression, are employed to examine the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. The data is analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

3.6 Ethical considerations

To ensure ethical conduct throughout the research process, several measures are taken:

1. Informed consent: Participants are provided with information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. They are informed that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time without consequences.
2. Confidentiality and anonymity: Participants' responses are kept confidential, and no personally identifiable information is collected. The data is reported in aggregate form to maintain anonymity.
3. Institutional approval: Prior to data collection, approval is sought from the relevant authorities, including the County Government of Kakamega and the researcher's academic institution.
4. Data management: The collected data is stored securely and accessed only by the researcher and authorized individuals involved in the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 352 questionnaires were distributed to employees of the County Government of Kakamega, and 348 were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 98.9%. The demographic profile of the respondents showed that 51% were female and 49% were male. The majority of the respondents

(43.8%) were aged 36 years and above, followed by those aged 31-35 years (26.4%). Most respondents had a graduate degree (61.9%), and 85.2% had been working in the organization for more than 5 years.

4.2 Descriptive statistics on employee engagement and organizational performance

The mean scores for the employee engagement items ranged from 3.78 to 4.12 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating a relatively high level of engagement among employees. The highest-rated item was "I am enthusiastic about my job" ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.81$), while the lowest-rated item was "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.93$).

For organizational performance, the mean scores ranged from 3.65 to 4.08. The highest-rated item was "Our organization consistently meets its performance targets" ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.88$), and the lowest-rated item was "Our organization has a high level of customer satisfaction" ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.96$).

4.3 Inferential statistics (e.g., correlation and regression analysis)

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher levels of employee engagement are associated with better organizational performance.

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance while controlling for demographic variables (gender, age, education, and tenure). The results showed that employee engagement significantly predicted organizational performance ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 47% of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.47$, $F(5, 342) = 60.45$, $p < 0.001$). Among the demographic variables, only education level had a significant positive relationship with organizational performance ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$).

4.4 Discussion of findings in relation to literature and research objectives

The findings of this study support the existing literature on the positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational

performance. The significant correlation between engagement and performance aligns with the meta-analytic findings of Harter et al. (2002) and the public sector study by Agyemang and Ofei (2013). The high levels of engagement reported by employees in the County Government of Kakamega suggest that the organization has been successful in fostering a work environment that promotes engagement.

The regression analysis results indicate that employee engagement is a significant predictor of organizational performance, even after controlling for demographic factors. This finding supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), which posits that job resources (e.g., autonomy, supervisory support) foster engagement, leading to better performance outcomes.

The study's objectives were met by assessing the level of employee engagement in the County Government of Kakamega, determining the relationship between engagement and performance, and identifying factors influencing engagement (e.g., education level). The findings highlight the importance of investing in employee engagement initiatives to enhance organizational performance in the public sector.

However, the study also revealed areas for improvement. The lower mean score for the item "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" suggests that some employees may be experiencing burnout or low energy levels. The County Government of Kakamega could address this by implementing wellness programs and ensuring that workloads are manageable.

Future research could explore the specific job resources and demands that influence engagement in the context of county governments in Kenya. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions of engagement and its impact on their work.

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of key findings

This study investigated the influence of employee engagement on organizational performance in the County Government of Kakamega, Kenya. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship

between employee engagement and organizational performance. Employees reported relatively high levels of engagement, and engagement was found to be a significant predictor of performance, even after controlling for demographic factors. Among the demographic variables, only education level had a significant positive relationship with organizational performance.

5.2 Implications of the study

The study's findings have important implications for the County Government of Kakamega and other public sector organizations. First, the results highlight the crucial role of employee engagement in driving organizational performance. This underscores the need for organizations to prioritize engagement initiatives and create work environments that foster engagement. Second, the study suggests that investing in employee education and development may contribute to better organizational performance, as higher education levels were associated with improved performance.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Despite its contributions, the study has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to better understand the causal relationships between engagement and performance. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias. Future studies could incorporate objective measures of performance to corroborate the findings. Finally, the study was conducted in a single county government, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made for the County Government of Kakamega:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive employee engagement strategy that focuses on creating a supportive work environment, providing opportunities for growth and development, and recognizing and rewarding good performance.

2. Invest in employee education and training programs to enhance their skills and knowledge, as this may contribute to better organizational performance.
3. Regularly assess employee engagement levels and gather feedback to identify areas for improvement and monitor the effectiveness of engagement initiatives.
4. Address issues related to employee well-being, such as workload management and burnout prevention, to maintain high levels of engagement and performance.
5. Foster a culture of open communication and collaboration to strengthen employee-supervisor relationships and promote a sense of belonging and purpose among employees.

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