African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 4(1), 2017
ISSN (online): 2312-0134 | Website: www.arjess.org

# Influence of Organizational Culture on the Employee Performance in the Civil Service in Kenya

Authors: Joyce K. Nyabuti[1], Ronald Chepkilot[2] and Charles Zakayo[3]
[1]Kabarak University, P.O. Private Bag 20157, Kabarak – Kenya
[2,3]Lecturers at Kabarak University, P.O. 20157, Kabarak – Kenya
Email of corresponding author: joynyabuti@yahoo.com

**Abstract**
*Even though the government of Kenya has launched several reform programs to promote effective performance among employees in the public service, the performance level is still wanting. A positive organizational culture such as a good reward and sustained motivation systems would improve the performance of an organization in general. This study sought to examine the influence of organizational culture on the employee performance in the civil service in Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The sample size of the study included two hundred and twenty five (225) respondents from seven government ministries. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to arrive at the sample. The study used questionnaire method to collect data from the respondents. Data from the questionnaire were coded and processed with the help of a statistical application, namely SPSS version 21. Quantitative approach involved use of descriptive and inferential statistics. From the analysis, the study found that there is a statistical significant association between organizational culture and employee performance in the civil service in Kenya. The results of the study inform the centrality of the concept of organizational culture in the performance of public institutions in developing economies like Kenya. Thus, there is a need to develop and implement an efficient and effective organizational culture that encourages and motivates good performance among employees in the public service.*

***Keywords:*** *Employee performance, Organizational culture, public service management, organization values, public service performance, Kenya civil service performance*

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## 1. Introduction

Despite that the Government of Kenya (GOK) has in the past launched several reform programs to enhance efficiency and productivity in public service, poor and declining performance among employees is evident. This inhibits realization of sustainable economic growth in the country. For instance, Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) (GOK, 1993) was designed to contain costs, improve performance in the public sector, and consolidate and sustain the gains made by reform initiatives but the wage bill is still increasing (Opiyo, 2006). The Government of Kenya through its path to the understanding of the nations' development agenda as enshrined in the First Medium Term Plan (2008-2012) and vision 2030 realizes that an efficient, motivated and well trained public service is one of the major foundation's pillar (GOK, 2007).

Globally, there seems to be a performance crisis in public service, while there is need to produce more for less (Nabukeera, Ali and Raja, 2014). This problem strikes through poor, developing and developed countries and has raised the appetite for efficiency and the need for evaluation mechanisms to help assess the performance of government institutions or programs that are quite inadequate in stakeholder expectations (Nabukeera, Ali & Raja, 2014). Salem (2003) stated that while it was clear by the 1980s that interest in Performance Management had moved from the ivory towers of academia to the corridors of government around the world, towards the end of the 1980s, many systems of Performance Management were born, adopted and implemented at many levels of the public sector and these were traced back to the use of cost benefit analysis in the 1960s; to management by objectives in the 1960s and 1970s; and to output budgeting in the 1960s. Most of these initiatives, however, were regarded as experimental and some were only adopted as one-off exercises. Governments have striven to introduce effective information systems (IS) for employees to provide electronic-service to the public. Industrialized countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan are constantly proposing new government renovation plans. To keep up with world trends, the Taiwanese government, under the E-Government Action Plan provided by the Research, Development, and Evaluation Commission of Executive, has promoted implementing e-government throughout the country (Yuan, 2001). According to reports by the Centre for Public Policy at Brown University, Taiwan's e-government services were ranked third among 198 countries in 2007 and second in 2008 (West, 2008). Also, through many years of development and implementation, e-government has become an important strategy for the implementation of reinvented and innovative services in many countries.

In Africa, most organizations have started adopting the use of the Balanced Score Card (BSC) as a way of improving employee performance (Malinga, 2004). In Ethiopia, there is growing interest in the use of the BSC in more firms with support from government (Tessema, 2005). In Uganda, public sectors have faced significant employee performance challenges during recent years (Kagaari et al, 2013); employee performance standards are being set out in various public institutions using the results oriented and quality management principles (Olum, 2004). With the changing working environment, technology developments and overall economic improvements in many countries across Africa, employees are beginning to have new demands. In South Africa, for example, recent developments in the way employees are managed in organizations

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have brought about the need to seriously consider employees as major stakeholders in organizations (Tchapchet et al, 2014).

In Kenya, performance measurement is being emphasized through quality controls as well as the implementation of balance score card (BSC) and Results Oriented Management (ROM) through monthly, quarterly and annual reports to various key monitoring and supervision institutions of the government (Olum, 2004). In order to increase work effectiveness and performance, it is important to address a number of issues, including increasing motivation among employees, making them feel satisfied with their job, and increasing their job-related well-being in general. A study conducted by Pattanayak (2008) points out that a positive organizational culture would improve the performance of an organization in different ways such as placing constraints on the individual's freedom of choice and providing a source of reward and punishment. Another study conducted by Fakhar, Zahid and Muhammad (2013), found out that the implementation of a good rewarding system and continuous motivation encourages the employees to do best to target achievements of the organization, instead of giving more focus on structures and policies. Therefore, basing on this background there was a need to investigate influence of organizational culture on the employee performance in the civil service in Kenya.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design in collection of quantitative data. The design is useful in describing the characteristics of a large population, makes use of large samples, thus making the results statistically significant even when analyzing multiple variables; the design also allows use of various methods of data collection such as questionnaire, structured and unstructured interviews and document analysis. The study targeted a population of 104,305 from all the eighteen (18) government Ministries (Maina, 2015). The study used stratified random sampling method to obtain the study sample from the 18 ministries. The ministries were stratified into three groups, namely big, medium and small. Random sampling procedure was then used to select a representative number from each strata, giving a total of seven ministries. A sample size of two hundred and twenty five (225) respondents was obtained using sample size determination formula for finite population (Nassiuma, 2000) but one hundred and ninety (190) respondents took part in the study which accounted to a response rate of 84.4%.

The study used questionnaire as the main tool of data collection. To ensure that the questionnaire was valid content validity was used. Split half method was used to estimate reliability of instruments where a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of 0.85 was obtained which is higher than the reasonable threshold of 0.7, thus making the instruments to be considered as reliable. Collected data were analyzed using quantitative data analysis approaches. The collected data were processed with the help of a statistical application, namely SPSS. The results were reported using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Background Information

The background information of the respondents that took part in this study included gender, age bracket, educational level and working experience. More than half of the respondents, (58%)

African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 4(1), 2017
ISSN (online): 2312-0134 | Website: www.arjess.org

were male and the rest 42% were female. The vast majority of the respondents, (83%) were within 31-40 years of age, 14% below 30 years and those between 41-50 years were only 3%. Nearly ,half (49.5%) of the respondents had college level of education, another 42.1% indicated they had university degree and only 8.4% had secondary school certificate. Slightly over half, (54.2%) of the respondents had a working experience of 6 years and above. The remaining 45.8% had a working experience of 5 years and below in public service.

### 3.2 Influence of Organization Culture on Employees' Performance

This study sought to find out the influence of organizational culture on performance of employees in the civil service in Kenya. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

Table 1

*Influence of organizational culture on employees' performance*

| Items | SA | | A | | UD | | D | | SD | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) |
| Shared values in the Ministry contribute to increased performance among the staff | 72 | 37.9 | 100 | 52.6 | 12 | 6.3 | 6 | 3.2 | - | - |
| The Ministry vision and mission help in building up a strong organization culture | 28 | 14.7 | 132 | 69.5 | 10 | 5.3 | 13 | 6.8 | 7 | 3.7 |
| Availability of work ethics in the ministry largely contributes to improved performance among the employees | 21 | 11.1 | 135 | 71.1 | 15 | 7.9 | 13 | 6.8 | 6 | 3.2 |
| The kind of communication and management styles used in the ministry determines employees performance | 33 | 17.4 | 134 | 70.5 | 9 | 4.7 | 14 | 7.4 | - | - |
| The teamwork spirit among employees in the ministry improves their performance | 36 | 18.9 | 131 | 68.9 | 14 | 7.4 | 9 | 4.7 | - | - |

***Key***: *SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; UD: Undecided; D: Disagree, SD Strongly Disagree*

As shown in Table 1, slightly more than half (52.6%) of the respondents agreed that presence of shared values in the Ministry contributed to increased performance among the employees in public service. This was further supported by 37.9% of the respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. Over two third (69.5%) of the respondents felt that the Ministry vision and mission helped in building up a strong organization culture. However, 10.5% refuted that vision and mission of respective ministries were sound.

With reference to the work ethics in the ministry, a vast majority (82.2%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that work ethics in the ministry contributed to better performance. However, 10% of the respondents reported that work ethics in the civil service contributed to poor performance.

African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 4(1), 2017
ISSN (online): 2312-0134 | Website: www.arjess.org

An overwhelming majority (87.9%) of the respondents agreed that the kind communication and management styles used in the ministry would determine the performance of the employees in public service. Only 7.4% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

On the question of the influence of teamwork on employee performance, a vast majority (87.8%) of the respondents were positive that teamwork spirit in the ministry improved employee performance. This was however not the case among 12.1% of the respondents who felt that the spirit of teamwork in the respective ministries was lacking and did not therefore influence employee performance.

### 3.3 Relationship between Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

The study sought to establish the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. Chi Square test was used to determine the relationship.

Table 2
*Organizational culture * employee performance crosstabulation*

| | | | Level of Employee Performance | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Good | Average | poor | |
| Organizational Culture | Vision and Mission | Count | 16 | 14 | 17 | 47 |
| | | Expected Count | 13.9 | 21.5 | 11.6 | 47.0 |
| | Work Environment | Count | 12 | 20 | 13 | 45 |
| | | Expected Count | 13.3 | 20.6 | 11.1 | 45.0 |
| | Communication | Count | 19 | 26 | 6 | 51 |
| | | Expected Count | 15.0 | 23.4 | 12.6 | 51.0 |
| | Team Work | Count | 9 | 27 | 11 | 47 |
| | | Expected Count | 13.9 | 21.5 | 11.6 | 47.0 |
| Total | | Count | 56 | 87 | 47 | 190 |
| | | Expected Count | 56.0 | 87.0 | 47.0 | 190.0 |

Table 3
*Chi-square Tests*

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 13.842[a] | 6 | .031 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 14.765 | 6 | .022 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .225 | 1 | .636 |
| N of Valid Cases | 190 | | |

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.13.

The results in Table 3 showed that there was a statistical significant relationship between organizational culture and employee performance in the civil service in Kenya, $\chi^2$=54.969, df = 6, N=190, p=0.03. Thus, organizational culture attributes including vision and mission, work

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ISSN (online): 2312-0134 | Website: www.arjess.org

environment, communication and team spirit significantly influence employee performance in the civil service.

**4. Discussion**

A study conducted by Schein (2010) found that organizational culture entails common values and behaviors of the people that are considered as tools that lead to successful achievement of organizational goals. Another study by Agwu (2014) found that the performance of an organization depends on the degree to which the values of its employees are widely shared. Similarly, a study conducted by Ogbonna (1993) found that shared and strongly held values enable management to predict employees' reactions to certain strategic options and reducing these values may bring undesirable consequences. Therefore, the finding of this study where a vast majority (90.5%) of the respondents felt that presence of shared values in the Ministry contributes to increased performance among the employees in public service concurs with previous studies.

Over two third (69.5%) of the respondents were positive that the Ministry vision and mission helped in building up a strong organization culture. This concurs with other studies conducted by Campbell (1997); Mullane (2002); Rigby (1994); Matejka et al. (1993); Campbell & Yeung (1991) that have delineated that mission and vision statements can be used to build a common and shared sense of purpose and also serve as conduit through which employees focus are shaped. This is also supported by other studies in the same area that found mission and vision statements tend to motivate, shape behaviors, cultivate high levels of commitment and ultimately impact positively on employee performance (Mullane, 2002; Collins and Poras, 1991; Daniel, 1992, Campbell, 1989; Ireland and Hitt, 1992, Klemm et al., 1991, Drucker 1959).

An overwhelming majority (82.2%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that work ethics in the ministry contributes to better performance. This is in line with Argyris and Schon's (1978) in Maglino (1998) and Sabir et al (2012) report that ethic values in a company have impact employees' performance at work. Furthermore, Enz (1988) and Amason (1996) in Maglino (1998) find otherwise as also supported by a study conducted by Attwell (1988) on influence of work ethics on employee performance, which found work ethic does not significantly influence someone's performance at work. This is in agreement with the response of minority (10%) in this study. This difference in findings could be attributed to the type of organization, and the organizational culture.

A vast majority (87.9%) of the respondents agreed that communication and management styles used in the ministry would determine the performance of the employees in public service. This is in agreement with a study conducted by Ada et al. (2008) that found for organization and human as a social being, communication has a vital importance, whether pros or cons are an inseparable piece of life and also it has an important role on all activities aimed at gaining organizational objectives. Attention has been given to the study of organizational communication in organizational behavior research as a result of the significance of this variable to organizational effectiveness. For instance, it has been found that effective communication improves job satisfaction (Holtzhausen, 2002) and which in turn improves productivity (Litterst & Eyo, 1982).

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This further concurs with a study carried out by Goris (2007) that found, communication improves employee job performance, while poor communication results to low employee's commitment to the organization. Further a study conducted by Ferris et al (1998) asserts that effective human resource system is based on supporting values that create a positive impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors which in turn influence their performance.

Organizations which have low or non-existent people orientation typically encounter more cynicism and distrust of management within the system while organizations with high people orientation are more likely to maintain loyal employees (Grinder, 2003). Team orientation can be interpreted or described as an aspect of the organization placing more emphasis on teamwork to accomplish work objectives and goals rather than an emphasis on individualized work (Robbins & Langton, 2003). On the other hand the finding of this study where 87.8% of the respondents "agreed" and "strongly agreed" that the teamwork in the ministry improves employee performance is in agreement with other previous studies. Therefore, teamwork should be encouraged in public sector where most employees opt to work on their own. This could lead to increased production among employees as well as achievement of set goals and objectives within the timelines.

The study found that there was a significant relationship between organizational culture and employee performance in Kenya's public service, $\chi^2$=54.969, df =6, N=190, p<0.03. An earlier study by Tshilidzi and Krishna (2016) on culture, leadership and individual performance in public service organizations in South Africa found that organizational culture is positively significantly correlated with employee performance (r = 0.408; p <0.05). Another study that was carried out by Njugi and Nickson (2014) on effects of organizational culture on employee performance in non governmental organizations in Kenya found that organization culture has a great influence on performance as it dictates how things are done, organization's philosophy, work environment, performance targets and organizations stability. Therefore, every organization should ensure that all attributes of organizational culture are put into practice for better performance among employees.

## 5. Conclusion

As manifested in the study findings, there is a statistical significant association between organizational culture and employee performance in public service. Therefore, there is a need to orient all employees through all attributes of organizational culture so as to initiate personal efforts towards realization of both short term and long term organizational goals, by practicing and implementing the guiding core values. The implication of the study finding is that all Ministries in Kenya should improve on working environment, communication, team work and more so have clear vision and mission that can be easily adopted by every employee. There is a need for the public institutions to develop and implement an efficient and effective organizational culture that encourages and motivates good performance among employees in the public service.

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**Suggested Citation**

Nyabuti, J.K., Chepkilot, R. & Zakayo, C. (2017). *African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences,* 4 (1), 18-26. Retrieved from http://www.arjess.org/social-sciences-research/influence-of-organizational-culture-on-the-employee-performance-in-the-civil-service-in-kenya.pdf