



WORKFORCE DESIGN AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The expanding role of the hotel industry as a global multi-cultural and multi-faceted sector cannot be underestimated. Most developing countries have embraced this sector as a critical source of revenue necessary for economic growth. However the work environment in which employees are expected to achieve globally accepted standards in service delivery has largely been given very limited research focus in Kenya. The main objective of this paper was to determine the effect of work design on employee performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County. The target population was 345 derived from a sample frame of three 4-star hotels in Kisumu County, selected through purposive sampling. The sample size of 104 was derived as 30% of the target population. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicated that at 5% level of significance, work design was a significant predictor of employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County where ($p=0.006 < 0.05$). These findings would enable researchers and policy makers to implement policies and practices as organizational factors that can impact significantly on the work environment and the overall performance of employees in the hotel industry and recommended the need to put in place structures that support these practices as a necessary component in the emerging hotel related businesses.

KEYWORDS: Employee performance, Work design

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between work environment and employee performance has continued to elicit debate among academics and policy makers across the hotel-related industry in most developed countries. This industry is no doubt characterized by higher rates of occupational injury and stress related illnesses compared to any other service sectors. Globalization and increased use of technology has brought tremendous change in the hotel sector and created new demands for the business world therefore changing the strategic intention of organizations in the achievement of strategic goals in this sector (Heng, 2012).

The evolving nature of the work setting in the hotel industry continues to transition into a stronger service economy, according to Vischer (2008), which means that the numbers of women in the employee population are growing and that many older employees stay in jobs for longer periods. For productive, safe, healthy workers, the necessity for good work design or good job design is crucial. It's also important to remember that most workers rely less and less on the physical aspects of employment, but rely more on the use of mental processes. There is also the idea that the

distinctions between mental and physical activities are fuzzy as work becomes more complex. Globalization, lean development, automation, the transition from single-handed to complex tasks and upgrading jobs to increased educational levels among employees all have an effect on the context and the difficulty of work and jobs. These factors are not static, and so the dynamics of employment and work are changing and the meaning of work will continue to change as societies change (Hammeed, *et al.*, 2009).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The hospitality industry is manpower-intensive and the performance of employees determines its profitability. Employees working in the hotel industry are often subjected to uncertainties occasioned by changes in the external and internal business environments. When this happens, the employees in the hotel industry are usually the first casualties; exposed and demoralized through massive lay-offs and restructuring. The overall profitability of the hotels depends on the service quality provided by the hotels to the customers. Thus, this paper sought to investigate



work study design that are consistent with employee performance.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work design is also known as job design or job design. It is a central feature of the management of human resources related to the concept of work contents, strategies and connections in order to meet technical and organizational requirements as well as the social and personal needs of the work (Armstrong, 2006). Job design is a workplace arrangement intended to resolve employee alienation and work dissatisfaction arising from repetitive mechanical work at the workplace. Organizations use job design to improve productivity through the provision of non-monetary incentives for workers (Hammed, *et al.*, 2009).

Job design is used to determine how activities or job in the working environment are designed and ensures that they are well associated with employee characteristics. Whereas both terms, job design, and workplace design are used interchangeably, the work design focuses on administrative improvements needed to improve working conditions, with a more realistic approach to work design and the modifications necessary for workplaces, equipment and body positions to make the worker work more efficiently (Aston, 2005)

The correctly developed job ensures that the staff are able to perform what is needed safely and in health, while minimizing physical and psychological pressure (Leblebici, 2012). It also helps to coordinate work, recognize problems like work overload, repetitiveness, and a restricted control of the work; and thus improves the organization's occupational health and safety (OSH). A well-designed job could result in more committed, safe and efficient workers, and both employees and organizations would benefit from this (Roeloelefsen, 2002).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study used a causal research design to determine the effect of work environment on employees'

performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County in Kenya. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), causal research designs are used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to determine the relationship between two or more variables. It plays an important role in determining the reasons behind a wide variety of processes and is correlated with a higher degree of internal validity due to the systematic selection of subjects.

4.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Kisumu County, which is located in the former Nyanza Province, with a population of 968,909 (Census, 2009) covering an area of 2085,9 km². It borders Siaya County to the West, Vihiga County to the North, Nandi County to the North East and Kericho County to the East. It has a coastline on Lake Victoria occupying the North, West and part of the Southern coast. It has a population density of 460 per square kilometer. The county extends from the Nandi Escarpment in the East to the Kano plains in the West with annual relief rainfall of between 1200 mm and 1300 mm. The region is warm all year round with average annual temperatures of 23 to 35 C (Kisumu County, 2014). The county has many hotels, many operated by private investors. This area was chosen for this study due to the high presence of tourism and industry, the presence of hospitality facilities and workers, the high rate of urbanization and the proximity of the researcher.

4.3 Study Population

The study population consisted of 345 employees employed in selected 4-star hotels in Kisumu County, Kenya. The target population for this analysis has been drawn from the top. Middle and low-level management Part-time employees and support staff employed in these hotels will not be included in the study (Kenya Tourism Sector Report).



Table 1: Target Population for 4-Star Hotel staff in Top-Level Management, Middle-Level Management and Low-Level Management in Kisumu County, Kenya

Hotel	Top-Level	Middle-Level	Low-Level
Kisumu Hotel	10	35	60
Acacia Hotel	10	30	55
Imperial Hotel	5	30	50
Le Savannah Hotel	5	20	35
Total	30	115	200

Source: Kenya Tourism Sector Report (2018)

4.4 Sampling Frame, Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Purposive sampling would be used to select four 4-star hotels public health care institutions as follows; Kisumu Hotel, Acacia Hotel, Imperial Hotel and Le Savannah These hotels have been in existence for more than five years and are more likely to encounter work environment related aspects.

Stratified random sampling was used to identify respondents to participate in the study. The sample structure included a list of employees who operated selected Hotels at the top, mid- to low-level, stratum. In

each stratum, a simple random sampling approach was used to select respondents to participate in the sample. Each employee would be allocated a unique identification number and, using a random number table, the respondents would be chosen to achieve a high degree of representation and to minimize bias.

The sample size was obtained using a formula developed by Kerlinger (1993) which states that 30% of the target population is representative enough for any given study. The sample size was therefore 104 respondents.

Table 2: Sampling Matrix for Top, Middle and Low Level Management in the Selected Hotels in Kisumu County

Level	Target Population	Sample
Top level	30	9
Middle level	115	35
Low level	200	60
Total 345	N	Total =104

Source: Researcher (2019)

4.5 Data Collection Methods

The research used qualitative as well as quantitative data. The analysis focused on primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through standardized questionnaires, which would provide respondents the ability to provide accurate information. In comparison, secondary data was obtained from a variety of sources such as journal archival records, policy papers, Legislative acts, official reports, the Internet and other related literature.

5. RESULTS

The study used the parameters where: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (U) , 4 = Agree (A) and 5= Strongly agree (SA). A summary of the findings is as shown in Table 4.13. The respondents agreed (45.0%) that their work is designed to allow for participation in decision making as depicted by a mean of 4.13 and standard

deviation of 1.192. 37.0% of the employees agreed that their work is meaningful in terms of building relationships. On the other hand, 35.0% of the respondents agreed that duties and responsibilities assigned to the employees match their skills and qualifications, while 35.0% were undecided on responding on whether their employers provides training opportunities on new technologies. Respondents (29.0%) agreed that flexible work schedules have been put in place by management, while 35.0% agreed that their workplace gives them opportunities for direct feedbacks from clients and stakeholders. Lastly, 32.0% and 33.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that their workplace allows for self-managing teams and agreed that their employers allows coordinated flow of critical information respectively.

**Table 4.2: Responses on Work Design**

	N	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Max	Min
My work is designed to allow for participation in decision making	100	11 (11.0)	13 (13.0)	18 (18.0)	45 (45.0)	13 (13.0)	4.13	1.192	5	1
My work is meaningful in terms of building relationships	100	11 (11.0)	10 (10.0)	29 (29.0)	37 (37.0)	13 (13.0)	4.09	1.113	5	1
The duties and responsibilities assigned to me match my skills and qualifications	100	8 (8.0)	18 (18.0)	27 (27.0)	35 (35.0)	11 (11.0)	4.01	1.142	5	1
My employer provides training opportunities on new technologies	100	17 (17.0)	26 (26.0)	35 (35.0)	17 (17.0)	5 (5.0)	3.99	1.089	5	1
Flexible work schedules have been put in place by management	100	11 (11.0)	18 (18.0)	28 (28.0)	29 (29.0)	14 (14.0)	4.02	1.136	5	1
My workplace gives opportunities for direct feedback from clients and stakeholders	100	9 (9.0)	14 (14.0)	28 (28.0)	35 (35.0)	14 (14.0)	4.14	1.309	5	1
My workplace allows for self-managing teams	100	11 (11.0)	11 (11.0)	18 (18.0)	28 (28.0)	32 (32.0)	4.15	1.147	5	1
My employer allows coordinated flow of critical information	100	11 (11.0)	12 (12.0)	24 (24.0)	33 (33.0)	20 (20.0)	4.05	1.073	5	1

Source: Researcher (2020)



A well-designed job could result in more engaged, healthy and productive employees, and these outcomes would benefit both employees and organizations (Roelofs, 2002). Work design is mostly in terms of non-monetary benefit, and hence better work overload and limited control over work will result in employees' work performance.

Hypothesis 1: Workforce Design and Employee Performance

To determine whether workforce design had significant influence on employee performance, hypothesis testing is done.

H_{01} Work design has no significant effect on employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County

Table 4.3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.510 ^a	.429	.827	1.70112

Source: Researcher (2020)

From the study findings in Table 4.19, the value of R-square is 0.429. This implies that, 42.9% of variation of employees' performance in the hotel

industry in Kisumu County was explained by work design.

Table 4.4: ANOVA Test

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1149.030	1	1149.030	397.067	.002 ^b
	Residual	237.291	99	2.894		
	Total	1386.321	100			

a. Dependent Variable: employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work design

Source: Researcher (2020)

From the findings in Table 4.20, at 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; work design is important in predicting of employees' performance in

the hotel industry in Kisumu County as indicated by significance value=0.002 which is less than 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.002 < 0.05$).

Table 4.5: Coefficients of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.476	.712		6.285	.000
	Work design	.310	.026	.910	19.927	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Source: Researcher (2020)

From Table 4.21, the study findings revealed that work design had significant influence on employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County (t -statistic=19.927, p -value=0.002 < 0.05). Therefore at 5% level of significance the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that work design has a significant relationship with employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County. Thus, for every unit increase in work design there was

a corresponding increase on employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County by 0.310. These findings are supported by Heng (2012) and Elzeiny (2013) who observed that there is a positive link between work environment and work design with employee satisfaction.



5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The study has provided evidence that work design had a significant effect on employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County and that it played a role in supporting them to attain their organizations' strategic goals and vision. The study provided evidence that workforce diversity is critical in depicting employees' performance in the hotel industry in Kisumu County and that it had a significant effect on their performance.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Work design is critical and forms an integral part in supporting the HR department in the allocation of duties and responsibilities in order to achieve an attractive work environment. Workforce diversity for hotel workers that is comprehensive in nature would lead to the introduction of innovation, tolerance in understanding different cultures, reduced employee turnover, quality service provision and higher employee output.

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