

## The Influence of Recruitment and Selection Policies on Employee Performance in County Governments in Kenya

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**Abstract:** This study paper is a report on the investigation of how county governments recruitment and selection policies influence employee performance in Kenya. The unit of study was County governments in Kenya. A descriptive design was employed in the form of a survey. The target population comprised all the county employees at the level of middle, senior and above in the 47 counties in Kenya, with estimated total employees of 58,617. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the counties to be used in the study. Consequently, six counties were sampled for participation based on demographic and geographic characteristics of the county. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample individual study respondents, numbering 224 in total distributed accordingly among the counties of study. Data was collected using questionnaire and secondary source, eliciting information as per the study objectives as well as gathering information with respect to respondent demographic profile. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages) was performed using SPSS. Inferential statistics consisting of ordered regression analysis and correlation coefficient analysis were used to analyze the data. The study findings pointed that employment policies such as equal employment opportunity have a direct significant influence on employee performance at 5% level. This study recommends that county governments promote fair employment policies during their recruitment and selection process since this influence employee performance.

**Keywords:** Recruitment and Selection Policies, Job Performance.

### INTRODUCTION

Recruiting talent is one of their most pressing problems [1] since proper recruitment and selection practices enhance organizational effectiveness [2]. Appointments into the county public service board are categorised into: permanent and pensionable, medium term, thus one to five years renewable contract and short term [3] Consequently, adhering to the constitutional ethos of openness and transparency in recruitment and selection practices by county governments is very crucial [4]. Moreover, the county governments public service, like the central government public service have also faced severe employee performance problems including patronage [5] inefficiency, poor performance and a lack of delivery of basic services [6]. However, the mechanisms upon which the recruitment and selection processes can activate levers that individual employee performance has remained opaque [7]. Akinboade, Kinfack and Mokwena [8] argue that African countries' poor performance in service delivery is because of unresponsiveness to changes in institutional arrangements. Because of patronage problems in the public sector recruitment and selection, decentralization efforts have been favored as they are likely to improve innovation and accountability at lower levels of

government [9]. Additionally, as it has been held that due to heightened local participation, the devolved units were likely to be staffed with civil servants capable of playing a significant role in reaching organization effectiveness and performance [10-12]. As Dougherty and Gelder [13] point out, the traditional civil service systems are often archaic, rule-bound and in need of private sector know-how.

Devolution was to help local leader provide public value by helping find talented employees to deliver on priorities and policies. Furthermore, in an effort to enhance managerial latitude, reformers have pursued policies aimed at decentralizing and deregulating the core functions of PHRM entailing decentralizing the rules and procedures associated with these core functions [14]. There is need to focus on performance-oriented approaches to public service delivery [15]. Further, recruitment and selection into the public sector has raised a lot of concern due to a number of challenges including labor market dynamics, declining trust in government, declining commitment and sector switching among public service employees, and expressed preferences for private sector work among public affairs graduates, and decreased job security among public sector employees [16].

The public sector HRM is becoming more flexible and similar to the private sector in content and character in a bid to meet these challenges. Hence, with better talent acquisition, employee engagement improves and so does the productivity [17]. Maximizing team engagement, motivation, and retention through due diligence in talent acquisition is vital in today's highly competitive environment. Only a talent resourcing process, that is well defined and well executed from start to finish yields consistent, complete results as well as being of competitive advantage in the struggle for talent. Diogo [18], the strategic role of such a human resource paradigm is likely to help significantly in the achievement of national goals and objectives. Besides, such a recruitment and selection approach rooted in professionalism and ethics [19] will allow an organization the opportunity to find the best candidate for an open position, but it also provides a potential candidate the opportunity to assess the organization for right-fit.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The following formula was used to come up with appropriate sample for the study [20].

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N - 1)e^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size,  
 N = Population,  
 C = Coefficient of variation, which is fixed between 0 – 30%  
 e = Margin of error, which is fixed between 2-5%.

The sample size was calculated at 30% coefficient of variation, 2% margin of error and a population of 58617 county government employees who undergoes selection and recruitment process of a high to medium vigour.

Thirty percent (30%) coefficient of variation was used to ensure that the sample size was wide enough to justify the result being generalized for the 47 counties in Kenya. Two percent (2%) margin of error was used because the study was a cross sectional survey, whereby the independent variables were not to be manipulated. Using the above formula, a sample of 224 respondents was selected as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample size distribution**

County	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Baringo	36	16.1%
Nairobi	29	12.9%
Bungoma	42	18.8%
Nakuru	39	17.4%
Trans Nzoia	38	17.0%
UasinGishu	40	17.9%
Total	224	100.0%

Cronbach's alpha, an index greater than 0.7 for the questionnaire items was established. This implied that the reliability of the instrument was good.

The following regression equation was used:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + u_i$$

Where:

Yi are the employee performance scores (parameter estimate) for each respondent

Xi are the independent variables (parameter estimate) for each respondent; recruitment and selection practices.

β0 is the regression constant

β1 is the coefficient for the recruitment and selection policies

ui are an unobservable error terms; a random disturbance

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Characteristics of the Respondents**

The subjects for the study comprised of employees in the county governments of six counties in Kenya; Baringo, Bungoma, Nairobi, Nakuru, Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu. The study gathered information on the respondents' personal attributes. These attributes encompassed the gender, age and level of education.

**Table 2: Gender of the Respondents**

Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	43	19.9
Female	173	80.1
Total	216	100.0

On the issue of gender, the results of the study showed a non-equal distribution of male and female as shown in Table 2.

About 80.1% of the respondents were female while 19.9% were male. From the study results more female participated in the study than males. This may be inferred that female respondents were more cooperative than their male counterparts were during data collection exercise. This is may not be a true representation of the population in the county government employees.

However, measures put in place to ensure improved employee performance mostly often the key role of women in management [21]. Involvement of communities, both men and women, in county government employment is the key to successful gender mainstreaming [22].

At the policy level, the importance of gender aspects in employment is often emphasized, yet its implementation has become elusive. According to Guslits [23], men dominate decisions making positions in employment, while low levels of employment women are usually kept reserved for women.

**Table 2: Respondents' Age Brackets**

Age brackets	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 35 years	71	32.9	32.9
Between 35-44 years	96	44.4	77.3
Between 45-54 years	42	19.4	96.8
Between 55-65 years	7	3.2	100.0
Total	216	100.0	

Majority (44.4%) of the respondents were aged 35 - 44 years. About 32.9% of the total respondents were aged less than 35 years while 19.4% were aged 45-54 years. There were very few respondents aged 55 - 65 years (3.2%) as shown in Table 2. A cumulative percentage of 77.3% of the respondents were aged either less than 35 years or between 35-44 years.

Age have an influence on employee ability to conduct the assigned tasks. According to Alonso and Lewis [24] assert age is highly correlated with both the employee grade and experience, though at declining rates. According to Mosca and Pastore [25], young and

middle aged employees are more productive and generally receptive to new technology.

According to Armstrong [26], age of an employees plays a critical role in retention. For early career employees (30 years and under) career advancement is significant. For mid-career employees (age 31-50) the ability to manage their careers and satisfaction from their work are important. Late career employees (over 50) will be interested in security. It is also the case that a younger workforce will change jobs and employers more often than an older workforce.

Most of the respondents had bachelor degree level of education as shown in Table 3.

**Table--3: Respondents' Highest Level of Education**

Highest Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Secondary certificate	20	9.3	9.3
Post-secondary certificate/Diploma	44	20.4	29.6
Bachelor's degree	107	49.5	79.2
Master's degree	35	16.2	95.4
PhD degree	10	4.6	100.0
Total	216	100.0	

Most of the sampled county government employees (49.5%) of the respondents had bachelor degree level of education. This was followed by respondents with post-secondary certificate/diploma as represented by 20.4% of the respondents. About 16.2% of the respondents had master's degree level of

education while 9.3% and 4.6% had secondary and PhD degree level of education, respectively. These results imply that majority of the county government employees have adequate formal education which is necessary to better service delivery in the employment.

**Table-4: Duration served in the county government**

Duration served (years)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than one year	30	13.9	13.9
Between 1 and 2 years	105	48.6	62.5
More than 2 years	81	37.5	100.0
Total	216	100.0	

Most of the respondents had served in their current positions in the county government for 1 – 2 years as depicted in Table 4.

About 48.6% of the respondents had served their respective county governments in their current positions for between 1 – 2 years. About 37.5% had served for more than 2 years while 13.9% had served less than 1 (one) year. These results can be explained by the fact that the County Governments in Kenya have been in existence since the year 2013. In addition, the

larger number of employees who have been in the County Government for the last two years may be the mass recruitment that was done at the initial stages of the implementation of devolution. Employees who have served for a period of more than two years is understood to be those inherited from the former Local councils and others seconded from the national government.

**Employee performance in county governments in Kenya**

**Table-5: Extent of employee performance**

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
I get opportunity to be creative and innovative in my work	6.0%	8.3%	7.4%	32.9%	45.4%	4.03	1.19
I am able to complete my job tasks accurately within time	2.8%	10.6%	7.9%	44.9%	33.8%	3.96	1.05
Generally, I am rated high in service delivery in my county	2.8%	14.4%	19.4%	33.3%	30.1%	3.74	1.12
My work targets are appraised within a given period of time.	4.6%	13.4%	9.7%	41.2%	31.0%	3.81	1.15
I take on challenging work tasks, when available	1.4%	7.9%	7.9%	46.8%	36.1%	4.08	0.94
I am motivated to meet and exceed my job expectations	0.9%	10.2%	10.2%	38.0%	40.7%	4.07	1.00
I find myself representing the County favourably to outsiders.	2.3%	7.4%	15.7%	39.4%	35.2%	3.98	1.01
I am motivated to be committed and loyal to the County Government	0.9%	7.4%	11.1%	36.1%	44.4%	4.16	0.96
I would still choose to work for the County Government	2.8%	9.7%	14.4%	31.0%	42.1%	4.00	1.10
The rate of absenteeism is low	2.3%	9.3%	13.4%	36.1%	38.9%	4.00	1.05
The rate of lateness to work is low	2.8%	9.3%	13.9%	38.9%	35.2%	3.94	1.06
The rate of turnover is low	8.3%	9.7%	14.4%	29.2%	38.4%	3.80	1.28
Total	3.2%	9.8%	12.1%	37.3%	37.6%	3.96	0.70

In determining the employee performance, twelve items were constructed to measure the county governments employee performance on a scale of 1 to 5 point in Likert-type survey instrument where strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1. The results were analyzed and summarized in Table 5.

On average, the employee respondent’s performance was highest with respect to their motivation to be committed and loyal to the County Government (mean of 4.157 with a standard deviation of 0.956). Taking on challenging work tasks, when available (mean of 4.083 with a standard deviation of 0.936), motivation to meet and exceed job expectations (mean of 4.074 with a standard deviation of 1.000), getting opportunity to be creative and innovative in work (mean of 4.032 with a standard deviation of 1.187). Continued choice of working for the County Government (mean of 4.000 with a standard deviation

of 1.000), and low rates of absenteeism (mean of 4.000 with a standard deviation of 1.052). The mean employee performance from twelve items used in this study was computed as 3.964 with a standard deviation of .697.

According to Coyle-Shapiro and colleagues [27] employee performance should be carefully managed through control of factors such as reward, job design, employment (or ‘manpower’) planning, diversity management, equal opportunities and employment relations. Kuvaas [28] and Thomas [29] reported a strong relationship between intrinsic motivation and self-reported work performance among typical knowledge-workers. However, Gagne’ and Deci [30] and Piccolo and Colquitt [31] argued that work motivation does not employee performance. Parker and Turner [32] noted that employee performance is influenced by organization reward system. They argued that any cost gain from the choice of paying lower

wages will have to be balanced against the resulting loss of performance from the less effective labour; and a cost burden from the high wage choice will produce an offset from the better performance of the better quality labour.

Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger and Hemingway [33], recommended that job autonomy is crucial in promoting job performance in organizations. When employees are granted adequate autonomy to perform their work, their output is normally higher. According to Coyle-Shapiro and colleagues [34] better hiring policies offer the prospect of finding more suitable, more productive workers whose with effective appraisal schemes can raise productivity and therefore superior employee performance. Similarly, feedback and performance-related pay can improve performance through better incentives. Parker and Turner [35] agreed

that it is certainly the case that employee recruitment can be highly accurate in acting as predictors of future job performance, if they are properly managed and selected appropriately. Recruitment and selection process can be extremely useful in bolstering the employee performance.

**Recruitment and selection policies in County Governments in Kenya**

This study sought to determine the employee perception on various recruitment and selection policies as practiced by their county governments. Respondents were requested to indicate how they agreed with a set of four statements that sought to determine their perception on how their governments were committed to implementation of various recruitment and selection policies. This is summarized in table 6.

**Table-6: Employee perception of recruitment and selection policies practiced by their county governments**

	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
Explicit comm.about diversity recruitment efforts is available	13 (6%)	12 (5.6%)	19 (8.8%)	76 (35.2%)	96 (44.4%)	216 (100%)	4.065	1.139
My county gov. has active diversity policy	4 (1.9%)	18 (8.3%)	40 (18.5%)	84 (38.9%)	70 (32.4%)	216 (100%)	3.917	1.003
Quota system of one third gender rule is followed	12 (5.6%)	20 (9.3%)	32 (14.8%)	87 (40.3%)	65 (30.1%)	216 (100%)	3.801	1.134
Affirmative action objectives	13 (6%)	19 (8.8%)	29 (13.4%)	86 (39.8%)	69 (31.9%)	216 (100%)	3.829	1.151

Most of the county government employees seemed to concur with the statement that their employer made explicit communication about diversity of the recruitment at the time of employment. Specifically, 44.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while an additional 35.2% agreed with the statement. On the other hand, it was just 5.6% and 6.0% of the respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. About 8.8% of the respondents were not decided. On a scale of 1 – 5, an average employee scored 4.065 with a standard deviation of 1.139 implying a high practice of fair employment policies.

As far as the statement, “My county government has active diversity policy” was concerned, most of the county government employees agreed with it. About 38.9% of the respondents agreed with an additional 32.4% strongly agreeing. On the contrary, side, a few respondents (8.3% and 1.9%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that their county governments had an active diversity policy. About 18.5% of the respondents were not decided. On a scale of 1 – 5, an average employee rated their county governments at 3.917 (with a standard deviation of 1.003) in terms of adhering to the active diversity policy, which still implied a high practice of fair employment policies.

Most county governments were perceived to adhere to quota system of one third-gender rule by the sampled respondents. About 40.3% and 30.1% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement, respectively. On the other hand, about 9.3% and 5.6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. However, about 14.8% of the respondents were not decided. On a scale of 1–5, an average employee rated their county governments at a score of 3.801 (with a standard deviation of 1.134) in terms of adherence to quota system of one-third gender rule which implied a high practice of fair employment policies.

Majority of the county governments were well practicing affirmative action objectives where women, physically challenged and minority were considered for job openings. About 39.8% of the respondents agreed with an additional 31.9% strongly agreeing. On the contrary, side, a few respondents (8.8% and 6.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement that affirmative action was practiced. About 13.4% of the respondents were not decided. On a scale of 1–5, an average employee rated their county governments at a score of 3.829 (with a standard deviation of 1.151) in terms of adherence to affirmative action objectives,

which implied a high practice of fair employment policies.

**Influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance**

In order to test the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance, the use of Pearson's Correlation coefficient analysis was employed. The results are shown in table 7.

**Table-7: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis for the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance**

		Employee Performance	Recruitment and Selection Policies
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	216	216
Recruitment and Selection Policies	Pearson Correlation	.495**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	216	216

The computed Pearson's correlation coefficient for the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance in this study was .495 (with a P-value of .000). The positive sign implies that the greater the adherence to the employment policies, the higher the employee performance.

To test the hypothesis, there is no significant influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance in county governments in Kenya, ordered logistic regression test was also used and the results summarized in Table 8.

**Table-4.8: Ordered Logistic Regression for the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance**

	Employee performance	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P> z
	Recruitment and selection policies	1.295	0.163	7.96	0.000

N = 216, Log Likelihood = -669.77, LR  $\chi^2$  (1) = 70.04, Prob> $\chi^2$  = 0.000, Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.050

The results in Table 8 reveal that the coefficient for recruitment and selection policies (1.295) was positive and statistically significant at 5%. The log likelihood for the fitted model of -669.77 and the log likelihood ratio chi-squared value of 70.04 (Prob>  $\chi^2$  = 0.000) indicate that the two parameters are jointly significant at 5%. Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> of 0.050, however, does not meet the statistical threshold of 20% implying that other than recruitment and selection policies, there factors that also influence employee performance. It is only about 5.0% changes in the employee performance that could be explained by differences in recruitment and selection policies. This therefore imply that the better the recruitment and selection policies, the better the employee performance.

Delery [36] concurred with this and argued that organization's personnel policies influence its performance. These decisions about how an organization carries out human resource management, including how it will fill job vacancies not only influence the nature of the positions that are vacant but also the type of people who fill these vacancies and by extension, the employee performance.

In Kenya, public institutions such as county governments are expected to implement fair recruitment and selection policies in a number of ways.

Employment Act [30] categorically stated that employment policies or practices should be carried out with fairness. This includes any policy or practice relating to recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria, appointments and the appointment process, job classification and grading, remuneration, employment benefits and terms and conditions of employment, job assignments, the working environment and facilities, training and development, performance evaluation systems, promotion, transfer, demotion, termination of employment and disciplinary measures. In the legal perspective Employment Act [30] state that "no employer should discriminate directly or indirectly, against an employee or prospective employees or harass an employee or prospective employee on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, pregnancy, mental status or HIV status.

According to Boxall and Purcell [37], Lepak and colleagues [38] and Subramony [39], all HR policies should be geared towards influencing employees' abilities to perform, motivation to perform, and opportunities to perform. Specifically, employee performance can be viewed as a function of three components recruitment and selection policies employed. According to

Lepak and colleagues [40] within HR systems, three general HR policies are directly instrumental; recruitment policies, selection policies, and training policies.

According to Delery and Shaw [41] and Gerhart [42], job design policies and involvement policies are used to improve employee performance by most organizations. Moreover, practices like empowerment, voice, employee participation, and information sharing may be used to realize involvement policy, which eventually boosts employee performance. Buggs [43] argued that within HR management employment policies and practices play a crucial role and act as a tool for organizations to make employees engrossed and engaged in their job performance by providing challenging job with available resources and opportunities for growth and development. Most of the strategic HRM literature has focused on how firms' investments in human capital through HR policies (or high-performance work systems) can positively influence performance [44]. There is a clear empirical relationship between the extent to which organizations use these policies and firm-level performance.

#### Test of Hypothesis

The objective of this study was to examine how recruitment and selection policies influence employee performance in county governments in Kenya. The objective was translated into the following hypothesis:

There is no significant influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance among the county governments in Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation coefficient and ordered logistic regression analysis. The computed Pearson's correlation coefficient for the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance (.495) had a P-value of .000. The ordered logistic regression coefficient for the influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance (1.295) was statistically significant at 5% (P-value = 0.000). Therefore the null hypothesis, was rejected thus there is a significant influence of recruitment and selection policies on employee performance among the county governments in Kenya

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruitment and selection policies influence employee performance such that the greater the adherence to the employment policies, the higher the employee performance. County governments should promote fair employment policies during their recruitment and selection process since this influence employee performance. Greater adherence to the employment policies is possible through necessary legislations.

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