



**THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT ON JOB PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL POLYTECHNICS IN KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Empowerment has elicited a lot of attention lately as employees' mobility has increased and organisations have had problems attracting and retaining talented employees. Organisations have therefore realized the importance of workforce empowerment and enshrined the concept in their policies although they hardly practice the empowerment or practice just a few element of empowerment. This study investigated the influence of psychological empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya. Psychological empowerment was considered as the independent variable, Job performance as the dependent variable and the moderating variable as job characteristics. The target population consisted of 2993 staff from the ten National Polytechnics in Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The researcher used disproportionate stratified sampling in selecting the respondents. The sample size consisted of 337 respondents. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Validity was established by pretesting and experts' verification. To determine the document's reliability, Cronbach's alpha score was computed, realizing a score of 0.724. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used. Out of the 337 questionnaires issued, 302 valid questionnaires were received translating to 89.6% response rate. Qualitative and quantitative analysis were done. To determine whether psychological empowerment influences job performance, regression analysis was conducted. The study established that psychological empowerment significantly influenced job performance. The study also established that job characteristics affected the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance. Data was presented in tables and figures. This study was expected to be useful to managers in designing empowerment plans; to the National Polytechnics managements, the public and the government in policy making. It would also contribute to knowledge and serve as a source of literature for further research.*

**Keywords:** Employee empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Job performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are faced with high competition and have challenges trying to improve their productivity. Empowerment has been identified as an effective way of promoting performance in an organization as employees are considered as a strategic and the rarest asset in an organization (Abadi & Chegini, 2013). In order to succeed, organisations have adopted empowerment management practices as stated by Berraies, Chafer & Yahia, (2014), which is a continuous process that includes sharing knowledge with employees, improving their intellectual capability and decision making autonomy (Malik, Chughtai, Iqbal & Ramzan, 2013).

Empowered employees are hardworking, devoted, dedicated and reliable. To the contrary, some managers tend to feel that they forsake their responsibility to lead and control the organization by empowering employees (Barton & Barton, 2011). Empowerment may have a negative effect as the employees' work burden and role ambiguity are likely to increase resulting from delegation of authority which may undermine the employees' performance and make them misuse their confidence levels, become arrogant or insubordinate their seniors (Kariuki & Murimi, 2015; Cheong, Spain, Yammarinoc & Yun, 2016; Elnaga & Imran, 2014).

This study defined empowerment as psychological empowerment indicated by competence, self-determination, impact and meaningfulness (Saif & Saleh, 2013). Quantity of work done, quality of work done, dependability and job knowledge was used to measure employee performance. Job characteristic consisting of skill variety and task identity were the moderating variable. Psychological empowerment is an inspiration perception demonstrated in four dimensions namely meaning, self-determination, and impact competence (Saif & Saleh, 2013).

Studies conducted in Kuwait and Turkey revealed that empowerment is achieved by acquiring knowledge and self-motivation. Potential capacities to exploit capabilities of employees are brought about by empowerment increased organizational creativity and innovativeness provided that the managers and employees have a common view in regard to aims and benefits (Abadi & Chegini, 2013; Celik, Iraz, Cakici & Celik, 2014; Ahmad & Atteia, 2016).

A study carried out in China revealed that when supervised by a leader who has a high self-awareness, employees tend to share information as well as express their thoughts and feelings. They also highly experience autonomy and improved self-efficacy. They are able to do more on for their organizations to achieve their potential (Zhang, Song, Wang & Liu, 2018). It was noted that managers lack sufficient time to guide their employees, as they have to spend most of their time monitoring the environment in and outside the organization leaving everyday jobs to the employees. Employees accomplished their responsibilities only when they know organizational goals and have the required knowledge, capability and motivation (Nafari & Vatankhah, 2016).

Empowerment reduces employee turnover, promotes good relationships and enables organisations to face challenges with confidence. A study carried out in Tunisia observed that empowerment can improve performance if well managed by employee's self-determination and involvement intensifying (Berraies, *et al.*, 2014). This agrees with researchers such as (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012) who note that empowerment is a result of organizational performance.

In Kenya today many organizations are engaged in empowerment practices such as: training, information sharing, delegating authority, participative decision making, job enrichment, rewarding exceptional contribution and trust. Most employees are in agreement that an information

sharing policy provides better empowerment and motivation (Ibua, 2014). Employee empowerment was found to increase the competitive advantage, employees' self-esteem, quality of goods and services, efficiency and effectiveness, and job autonomy (Mogeni, 2011).

A skilled workforce is one of the basic necessities for a country to move towards industrial and economic growth. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is key in building the workforce and therefore one of the priorities of the Government's development agenda. Having a well skilled workforce is vital in enabling the country to achieve its 'Big Four Agenda' which includes affordable housing, food security, manufacturing and universal healthcare as well as in achieving sustainability, aimed at ensuring equitable, inclusive and quality education as well as promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). Education in Kenya is classified into three distinct levels, University education which covers degree awarding institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which covers all the vocation and technical training institutions and basic education which covers primary and secondary education (Sessional paper no 1, 2005). TVET institutions provide opportunities which serve either as after-school or as alternatives to the general education (Nyerere, 2009). Orientation to the work world and the attainment of appropriate capabilities is one of the most important elements of TVET.

TVET education is expected to offer equal opportunities to the learners to advance to the highest academic level or through TVET education. The polytechnics employees comprise of specialized tutors, technicians and other non-staff (Kinara, 2014). TVET targets to impart technical and vocational skills expected to reduce poverty, influence cohesion and create employment. TVET faces a number of challenges including poor perception that brand the sector as a choice of last resort for those who fail to

meet the examination marks required to join university education (Kinara, 2014).

Until 2005, Kenya had four NPs which included The Kenya, Mombasa, Eldoret and Kisumu Polytechnics. Kenya and Mombasa Polytechnics were upgraded to technical universities in the years 2005 and 2007 respectively leaving only Eldoret and Kisumu Polytechnics as the only National Polytechnics. The upgrade was meant to be aligned to Vision 2030 goals, strengthening capabilities in technical skills required in the current knowledge economy (Ouma, 2016), referring to a statement made by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education.

Only ten out five hundred and forty Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions in Kenya are of national status and are known as National Polytechnics. The National Polytechnics became ten following the upgrade of eight technical training institutes in 2016 which included Kisii, Kabete, Kitale, North Eastern Province, Meru, Mombasa (renamed Kenya Coast National Polytechnic), Nyeri, and Sigalagala (Ouma, 2016). The upgrading of the eight institutions was aligned with the government's objectives of developing an harmonizing, coordinating and providing effective Technical Vocational Education and Training TVET system with the capability of generating quality employees with the correct attitudes, values and skills required for the numerous economy sectors success as said by the CS in charge of Ministry of Education (Ouma, 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Whereas organisations have developed policies that promote employee empowerment, recent research have shown that these policies are partially not or implemented, thus affecting employee performance (Shiundu, 2011). A lot of government and organisations' resources are used to hire and retain talented and experienced employees. While empowerment is expected to improve employee

performance as indicated by some researchers (Ibua, 2014; Seibert, Wang, Chen & Chen, 2011; Spreitzer, 1995), others have observed negative effects such as stress and costs on the organisations as a result of empowerment (Kariuki & Murimi, 2015). Performance in TVET institutions is not satisfactory and is partly attributed to employees in these institutions tending to have lower income and status than employees in higher education or similarly skilled workers in the private sector, making them feel inferior and affecting their performance (South African Development Community, 2011). Although, the government of Kenya has organised many employee empowerment programmes such as training development opportunities and improved rewards, services delivery in TVET institutions has not been satisfactory (Maina, 2016). NPs in Kenya have experienced high staff turnover which affects their service delivery. Organisations are unable to implement empowerment fully due to bureaucracy, which encourages dependency, obedience, traditions and rules that outline what and how is to be done, thus suppressing discretions and initiatives (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Studies regarding empowerment have mainly been done in developed countries while only a few have been done in the developing countries. Few studies have been carried out in Kenya's public and education sectors, although education is one of the major sectors anticipated to lead the country towards accomplishing its anticipated goals (Hanaysha, 2016; Kenya Vision 2030, 2010; Kariuki & Murimi, 2015).

### **Research Objectives**

- To establish the influence of employee psychological empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.
- To establish the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship between employee psychological empowerment and

job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>** Psychological empowerment has no significant influence on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.
- H<sub>02</sub>** Job characteristics have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between employee psychological empowerment and job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Employee empowerment is envisaged by some researchers as a function of elements which are authority, decision-making autonomy, resources availability and independence in the work performance philosophies; observed competence that reveals role-understanding, to enable skillful accomplishment of tasks and handling role-related non-routine circumstances. The objective internalization aspect comprising of the revitalizing assets of a well-intentioned cause obtained from the organization's management (Menon, 1999). A two-factor psychological empowerment model which includes influence (comprising of self-determination and impact) and attitude (involving meaning and competence) has been identified by other researchers (Gazzoli, Hancer & Park, 2010).

Psychological empowerment pays attentions to motivation rather than management practices which upsurge employees' levels of authority (Saif & Saleh, 2013). The influence of intervening aspects suggests that the relation between empowerment and employee productivity is compound (Tuuli & Rowlinson 2009). Employee commitment is said to reflect a psychological effect which describes relations between organizations and their employees and has determines their decision to stay or leave their organization (Mukanzi, Gachunga, Ngugi & Kihoro, 2014).

Psychological empowerment is the mental aspects of practices through which organizations, individuals and societies cultivate consciousness of their surroundings, build social networks and get in charge of their lives (Taktaz *et al.*, 2012). Choice in psychological empowerment is also known as self-determination, an employee's control of task performance is related to the choice opinion. Choice is associated with reduced isolation at work, higher efficiency level, job satisfaction; increased job involvement increased creativity and reduced stress (Taktaz *et al.*, 2012). People feel that they have a choice at work when involved in an activity without being forced to do it or abandon it. Employees feel that they have the independence if they can make decisions regarding their work and control how, duration and pace the tasks are to be performed (Kitayama & Cohen, 2011).

Meaningfulness is the belief that one's work is of importance to them and are affectionate for what they do. Meaning is a match between the job requirements, beliefs, values and person's demeanor (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2009). Research has concluded that people who find meaning in their jobs are more involved in the jobs and more committed (Abadi & Chegini, 2013). Employees get satisfied as long as they consider their work meaningful (Tutar, Nart, Bingöl, 2015).

Task significance is the level to which a person's work touches on other person's lives either in the organization or elsewhere. The job is more meaningful if it can improve the lives of other people either emotionally, physically or psychologically (Hadi & Adil, 2010). Empowered employees feel significant and value their activities. They experience harmony and significance as a result of their engagement in the activity (Abadi & Chegini, 2013; Jha, 2011).

Impact denotes the level that one can sway operation and managerial results at work (Abadi & Chegini, 2013). Empowerment practices make employees to

have an impact over their place of work, have autonomy and feel more capable (Spreitzer, 1995). Employers should be cautious because work overloads imply that the organization does not value its employees (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2015). For an individual to believe that he/she has the ability to change their work environment, they need to feel effective in the job (Tutar *et al.*, 2015).

Job characteristics are work features, mainly implying the level that work is intended to enhance work motivation and job satisfaction for the holders (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; Hadi & Adil, 2010). Job characteristics are correlated with performance and job satisfaction. Skill variety means the perceived variance and combination of talents and skills essential for the performance of a job. Skill variety refers to the level to which different activities are required in carrying out a job. This defines the number of talents and skills required in a job, whether the job is monotonous or whether the employee is required to perform different tasks or activities. Skill variety entails employees performing all necessary tasks to complete a job (Mukul *et al.*, 2014). Task identity refers to the requirements of finishing a job with a visible outcome and accomplishment comprehensive, distinct piece of work instead of its pieces. Employees are able to discover more meaning in their jobs when they are involved throughout the entire process and can identify a visible outcome at the completion of the work (Mukul *et al.*, 2014). The job characteristic model predicts that employees are likely to be highly motivated and have improved performance depending on the features entailed in a job. The employees will be more satisfied with the work and will have reduced turnover and absenteeism (Hadi & Adil, 2010).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive survey design and regression research design which was considered

appropriate to give the descriptive statistics while correlation research design was appropriate for the inferential statistics (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The target population of this study consisted of the 1214 staff of the National Polytechnics. The ten National Polytechnics in Kenya and all the staff in each National Polytechnic. Disproportionate stratified sampling was used to certify that selected samples from each group characterized the whole sample selected for the study. The Fisher's formula was used to determine the suitable study's sample size of 337 employees. The researcher assumed 95% desired confidence level. Data was collected using self-completion questionnaires which were found efficient in collecting information from a huge sample since respondents answered the same questions, (Saunders & Rojon, 2014).

A pilot study was used to detect any composition or design fault (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Through pilot testing, prospective problems and costly mistakes were noted and rectified (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Inconsistencies established in the questionnaire were amended. Content validity of the data collection instruments' was achieved through evaluating the content intended to be measured and subjection of the tool to experts for rational analysis (Kothari, 2014).

Regression model of the nature  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$  was used to model the relationship between employee psychological empowerment and job performance while the job characteristics' moderating effect on the relationship followed regression models was of the nature:

Model 1:  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$

Model 2:  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_m M + e$ ;

Model 3:  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_m M + \beta_{m1} X_1 M + e$

Where, P = Employee Performance,  $\beta_0$  = Y intercept term,  $\beta_1$  = Beta coefficients, X = psychological Empowerment, M = Job Characteristics, e = constant

term (disturbance term),  $\beta_m$  = coefficient of moderator,  $\beta_{im}$  = coefficient of interaction term and Z = job characteristics (Kothari, 2014).

## FINDINGS

### Descriptive statistics results

Data was collected from the National Polytechnics in Kenya. A response rate of 89.6% was realised as 302 were correctly filled and returned out of 337 issued questionnaires. According to Kothari (2014) a response rate of more than 70% is suitable for investigation. Based on this affirmation, the 89.6% response rate was satisfactory. Validity was attained by engaging experts whose inputs and suggestions were analyzed and implemented.

Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to test internal consistency reliability for variables' constructs with the aid of SPSS software. A Cronbach Alpha value equal to or greater than 0.70 is considered sufficient (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). The Cronbach's alpha obtained in this study was 0.724. This was considered to be within the acceptable level of internal consistency, indicating that the instrument was reliable which indicated that the instrument's reliability was adequate for the subsequent stages of analysis. An aggregation of thirteen (13) items gave a composite variable referred to as psychological empowerment which had a mean of 3.7269 and a standard deviation of 1.0285 while seven (7) items were aggregated, resulting to job characteristics whose respective mean and standard deviation were 3.5957 and 1.2957.

The researcher wished to establish the respondents' demographic characteristics. This included a general analysis on the gender, age bracket, duration one had worked in their institution as well as the respondents' academic qualifications. The study established that respondents were fairly distributed in terms of gender in the study since 51.03% were male while 49.04% were female. Majority of the employees, 66.93% were below 50 years old as 41.75% were

between 31 and 40, 25.18% below 30, and 25.18% were between 40 and 50 years old. Only 7.62 % aged between 51 and 60 years and 0.33% were above 60 years old. The national polytechnics therefore were concluded to have a youthful staff.

Descriptive statistics allows the research to describe a distribution of the scores of measurements using indices or statistics. Respondent's opinion was sought on whether their skills and abilities contributed to their job performance, 12.91% of the respondents strongly agreed, 40.73% agreed, 14.57% disagreed, 11.92% strongly disagreed while 19.87% of the respondents were not sure. Majority of the respondent 81.79% agreed that knowing what was expected of them in their jobs determined the level of their performance. 80.46% indicated that they could skillfully perform the task and undertakings required in their jobs. The National Polytechnic employees were confident of their ability of doing their work as 14.24% disagreed and 56.62% strongly disagreed with the statement that they were not confident of their ability to do their jobs. 55.97% agreed to have autonomy in performance of their work, 21.52% were not sure whether they had the autonomy or not. Majority of the respondents, 81.79% felt that they had substantial freedom of doing their jobs. 83.12% found a lot of meaning in their job activities. For most of the employees, the objectives of the tasks assigned to them were compatible with their value systems. While only 11.59% felt that they acted on behalf and for the greater good of their institutions, 13.58% were not sure. However, 74.84% agreed to have acting on behalf and for the greater good of their institutions.

On whether they were guided by their own standards and ideas in achieving their organizations' goals, 39.74% and 17.55% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. Only 14.9% of the respondents were not sure. On whether employees impact largely depended on what happened in their institution and whether their contribution in their organisations

energized them to give their best respectively, 17.22% and 12.58% were not sure. Slightly more than half of the respondents, 51.98%, felt that they did not influence their institutions' operating outcomes and achievement while 25.83%. The items had their means ranging between 2.07 and 4.1 while the standard deviation ranged between 0.87 and 1.28. On whether the variety of tasks in their jobs encouraged them to perform their duties, 30.46% agreed and 33.44% agreed strongly. Employees' skills enabled them to accomplish a wide range of tasks within their job as 64.9% agreed while 27.82% disagreed. Employees' variety of tasks in their jobs derailed their work performance 48.67% disagreed that as opposed to the 36.1% that agreed while 15.23% were not sure. According to 46.03% respondents, their jobs have obvious beginnings or ends, disagreed while 41.06% believed that their jobs have obvious beginnings and ends. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they were encouraged to work more when they are able to finish their tasks.

Employees could complete a piece of work without despairing as indicated by 37.42% agreed and 25.83% strongly agreed. Most of the employees received significant autonomy in making decisions in their jobs as indicated by 64.57% of the respondents. Most jobs required staff to perform a variety of tasks as indicated by the 42.05% who agreed and 26.16% who strongly agreed. Over half of the respondents, 65.56% felt that the results of their work would significantly affect other people's lives while 26.5% did not agree with this assertion. The descriptive data revealed that the items had their means ranging between 2.82 and 3.66 and standard deviations between 1.15 and 1.48.

### **Inferential Statistics results**

The study pursued to establish the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance after the descriptive statistical analysis. Linear regression analysis was applied to determine the nature of the relation. Inferential statistics were



applied to test the hypothesis and determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis (Ho). At 5% level of significance, if p-value was < 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Parametric tests which include correlation, t-tests, regression and analysis of variance are founded on the assumption that the data was normally distributed (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). For the tests to be reliable, the data does not have to be perfectly normally distributed. Elliot & Woodward (2007) agreed that parametric procedures could be used even when the data is not perfectly normally distributed. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are used for testing the normality assumption.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test is the most popular test for normality (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Regression can only be estimated accurately by meeting the basic assumptions of multiple regressions. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and shapiro-Wilk test were used in testing whether the distribution could comparable to a normal distribution. The test was non-significance ( $p > 0.05$ ) it meant that the distribution of the sample has no significant difference with a normal distribution implying that it could be normal. However, if, the test was significant, ( $p < 0.05$ ) the distribution is significantly different from a normal distribution thus it is non-normal. The results were as indicated in table 1.

**Table 1: Normality Tests**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Job performance	.091	294	.000	.979	294	.000
Psychological empowerment	.059	294	.015	.992	294	.092
Job Characteristics	.143	294	.000	.944	294	.000

Using Shapiro-Wilk normality tests as recommended by Ghasemi & Zahediasl, (2012), job performance (P) had p-values less than 0.05 while psychological empowerment ( $X_1$ ) had its p-value greater than 0.05. If ( $p < 0.05$ ), the data is non - significant and if ( $p > 0.05$ ), the data is then significantly different from normal distribution, (not normally distributed). The study concluded that the data for psychological empowerment ( $H_{01}$ ) was normally distributed. Psychological empowerment was normally distributed thus the data could be used in a regression analysis.

Regression analysis was employed in determining the linear statistical relations between the independent

and dependent variables of the study. It was also used to determine the moderating effect of the moderator. The regression model of  $X_1$  and P was significant ( $F(1,294) = 16.177$ , P-value <0.001), psychological empowerment predicted performance validly in the model. The Coefficient of determination  $R^2$  of 0.471 showed that 47.1% of job performance was elucidated by the psychological empowerment. The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.469 explained 46.9%, remaining percentage can be said to be due to other factors not included in the model. The R of 0.686 illustrated that there is a positive correlation between psychological empowerment and job performance as shown in table 2.

**Table 2: The Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Job Performance**

<b>Model Summary</b>										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	
						F Change	df1	df2		
1	.686 <sup>a</sup>	.471	.469	.37845	.471	261.711	1	294	.000	
2	.687 <sup>b</sup>	.472	.468	.37871	.001	.605	1	293	.437	
3	.687 <sup>c</sup>	.472	.467	.37927	.000	.128	1	292	.721	

  

<b>ANOVA<sup>d</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.484	1	37.484	261.711	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	42.108	294	.143		
	Total	79.592	295			
2	Regression	37.571	2	18.785	130.982	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	42.022	293	.143		
	Total	79.592	295			
3	Regression	37.589	3	12.530	87.104	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	42.003	292	.144		
	Total	79.592	295			

  

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.995	.022			181.188	.000		
	PE	.786	.049	.686		16.177	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	3.975	.033			120.188	.000		
	PE	.778	.050	.679		15.601	.000	.952	1.051
	JC	.035	.045	.034		.778	.437	.952	1.051
3	(Constant)	3.973	.034			118.245	.000		
	PE	.753	.087	.657		8.679	.000	.316	3.168
	JC	.036	.045	.034		.787	.432	.951	1.052
	PE*JC	.038	.106	.027		.358	.721	.323	3.098

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

To find out the moderating effect of job empowerment and job performance in National characteristics on the relation between employee Polytechnics, regression analysis was run with an aim

of confirming whether job characteristics influenced the relationship between employee empowerment and job performance. If psychological empowerment is controlled, Job characteristics affect job performance. Both Job characteristics and psychological empowerment predict job performance. However, adding psychological empowerment and job characteristics to a model does not improve the significance.

The Model  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$  was significant ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ) while the other two models,  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_M M + e$  and  $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_M M + \beta_1 M X_1 + \beta_1 M X_1 M + e$  were not significant as they had  $p$ -value = 0.437 and  $p$ -value = 0.721 respectively. The F Change for  $X_1$  was significant (F Change = 261.711,  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ), implying that,  $X_1$  significantly influences P. On adding M (JC) as a predictor to the model containing  $X_1$ , the F Change increased substantially and the predictor became significant (F Change = 130.982,  $p$ -value = 0.437). With the introduction of the interaction term ( $X_1 M$ ) to this model, the model remained insignificant, revealing (F Change = 0.87.104,  $p$ -value = 0.721). This implied that job characteristics do not predict nor moderate of the relation between psychological empowerment ( $X_1$ ) and job performance (P). The model equations were as follows:

Model 1:  $P = 3.995 + 0.786 X_2$

Model 2:  $P = 3.975 + 0.778 X_2 + 0.035 M$

Model 3:  $P = 3.973 + 0.753 X_2 + 0.036 M + 0.038 X_2 M$

Psychological empowerment predicts job performance and including job characteristics to the model does not improve the significance.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study revealed that psychological empowerment is very important and contributes to employees' performance significantly. This agreed with the assertion that psychological empowerment is the most important aspect that affect employee performance Taktaz *et al.*, (2012). (Wang, 2012;

Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012) indicated that empowerment makes existing employees feel competent, self-determined, find personal meaning and feel effective. This also agreed with Heshi *et al.*, (2013)'s findings of who asserts that employee empowerment improves performance and enhances the quality of service offered. It was also in agreement with a study that established that empowered employees are reliable, dependable, dedicated and serve as their organizations' ambassadors. They are more proactive, have a feeling of belonging to their organization and easily embrace change. Such employees have a sense of increased responsibility, ownership for their work and accountability (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). Another study indicated that empowering employees decreases operational costs, employee turnover and retention costs and increases productivity (Narmadha, 2015). This is also in agreement with the assertion that employees empowerment is a managers' obligation as the job cannot be done to satisfaction if employees are not empowered (Aryan *et al.*, 2016). Elnaga & Imran, (2014) stated that employee empowerment plays a major part towards increasing the organisations' performance.

To establish the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya, the study discovered that job characteristics affect the relationship. This agreed with the findings of Hadi & Adil, (2010) who stated that job characteristics are correlated with performance and job satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant and positive relationship existed between psychological empowerment and job performance, implying that an increase in psychological empowerment increases job performance. The regression results revealed a positive relation between psychological

empowerment and job performance in the national polytechnics in Kenya. The null hypothesis was rejected. If psychological empowerment is controlled, Job characteristics affect job performance. Both Job characteristics and psychological empowerment predict job performance.

The study results indicated that employee empowerment contributes significantly to employees' job performance. The researcher recommended that employers and policy makers should focus more on

all the dimensions of empowerment which include psychological, (meaningfulness, self-determination, competence and impact / effectiveness) which has been found to be effective in job performance Job characteristics (skill variety & identity) influenced the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance. The study therefore recommended that managers and policy makers should also focus on the job characteristics in order to achieve high employee job performance.

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