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Accepted: January 13, 2020

ABSTRACT

Organisations have realized the importance of employee empowerment and enshrined the concept in their policies. Although this has been done, organisations practice a few elements of empowerment while neglecting some. This study investigated the influence of relational employee empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya. The independent variable was considered as relational employee empowerment while job performance was considered as the dependent variable. Job characteristics were the moderating variable. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Respondents were selected using disproportionate stratified sampling. The sample consisted of 337 respondents out of the 2993 staff in the National Polytechnics in Kenya. Data was collected using questionnaires. Validity was established by conducting a pilot study. Cronbach's alpha score was computed to establish reliability, realizing a score of 0.801. Regression analysis was used. The response rate was 89.6%. The study established that relational employee empowerment significantly influences job performance and that job characteristics significantly affect the relationship between relational empowerment and job performance. Data presentation was done using tables and figures. The study was considered beneficial to the staff, National Polytechnics managements and the government for policy making. It is also expected to contribute to knowledge and as literature for further research.

Key words: *employee empowerment, relational empowerment, job characteristics, job performance*

CITATION: Kagucia, C. N., Mukanzi, C. M., & Kihoro, J. M. (2020). The influence of relational employee empowerment on job performance in national polytechnics in Kenya. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(1), 205 – 222.

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment has been identified as an effective way of promoting performance in an organization (Abadi & Chegini, 2013). Organisations have adopted empowerment management practices in order to succeed (Berraies, Chaher & Yahia, 2014). Empowered employees are devoted, hardworking, dedicated and reliable, although some managers feel as if 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 ensuing from delegation of authority (Kariuki & Murimi, 2015). Employees can misuse their confidence levels, become arrogant or insubordinate their seniors (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). This study considered relational empowerment as delegation of authority and decision making, teamwork, feedback and accountability for outcomes. Employee performance, the dependent variable was measured as quantity of work done, quality of work done, dependability and job knowledge. Relational construct includes delegation of authority and decision making, teamwork, feedback and accountability for outcomes (Mcintire, 2011).

Education in Kenya is classified into three distinct levels, University Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 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. 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). 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.

Statement of the Problem

Recent research has shown that empowerment policies are not or are partially implemented, thus affecting employee performance although organisations have developed policies that promote employee empowerment (Shiundu, 2011). 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). 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). Only a few studies regarding relational empowerment have been carried out in both developed developing countries. Few related studies have been carried out in Kenya's public and education sectors, despite education being 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 Objective

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

Research Hypothesis

- H₀₁** Relational empowerment has no significant influence on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.
- H₀₂** Job characteristics have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between employee relational empowerment and job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When positive relationships are encouraged among managers, co-workers and juniors, the resultant associations confer informal power (Orgambidez-Ramos & Borrego-Alés 2014). A study carried out in China revealed that when supervised by a leader who has a high self-awareness, employees have a tendency to share information and reveal their thoughts and feelings. They are able to do more on for their organizations to attain their potential (Zhang, Song, Wang & Liu, 2018). Although empowerment was established to be a useful instrument for managers, 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.

A study carried out in Turkey revealed that enterprises that practice empowerment strategies increase their organizational creativity and

innovativeness provided that the managers and employees have a common view in regard to aims and benefits (Celik, Iraz, Cakici & Celik, 2014). It is important that supervisors assess not only abilities and skills such as knowledge but also relevant skills, abilities and creativity. The study revealed that there is an important interface between emotional intelligence and knowledge and that creativity significantly influences performance. Managerial feedback is important in strengthening the relation between creativity and employee performance (Agnihotri, Rappandzulis & Gabler, 2013). Another survey in the United States of America conducted on behalf of Cornerstone on Demand, indicated that employees are not empowered by their employers with the insight into business objectives, correct training or performance feedback. The study revealed that in the six months preceding the study: 68 percent of employees had not received feedback from their supervisors. 25 percent had been assigned new responsibilities and duties that were outside their key skill set, 53 percent did not clearly understand their contribution to company objectives while 82 percent had not talk over their career goals with their superiors (Kelton, 2013).

Empowered employees are more motivated, have higher productivity, perform better and are better aligned with an organization's objectives (Laschinger, Wong & Grau, 2013). Employees are likely to support managements in case of crisis in order to ensure continuity of the firm, indicating that empowerment has an impact on their performance (Bhankaraully, 2018). While leaders talk about employee empowerment, it is not clear how far, at what time and what to extent leaders are required to foster leadership throughout the organisation. People want the managers to be in the fore front and lead charismatically (Gupta & Kurian, 2006). If top managers dictate, some employees will be silenced; while some will be frustrated for lack of support if managers don't communicate adequately.

Empowerment succeeds depending on the role of a leader and their ability to get the message under cross-purposes and mixed signals. Supervisors have a duty of bridging divergences in organizational circumstances combined with psychological urge to work (Bhatt, 2017). Employees embrace decision making more when frequently involved in discussions relating to recent issues. Trust in a leader is an important indicator of empowerment (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2009). Leaders enable employees to value and find meaning in their work by providing information about strategic and operative organisational goals. Leaders should provide employees with feedback and coach them since constructive feedback and be role models are key sources of information and self-efficacy that improve employees feeling of competence. Relational support comes from supervisors or co-workers and can cushion employees from many negative outcomes (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012).

Empowerment involves responsibility and decision making power delegation from senior managers to other managers in the administrative hierarchy (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Some managers think that they succeed because of their power. Such managers consider sharing power with employees as a threat. Some employees take empowerment to be the power to make unilateral decisions and unrestricted authority leading to failure to collaborate. Some refuse to assume more responsibility and stick to the comfort of being dependent to the seniors (Dobre, 2013). Leadership related factors that undermine empowerment efforts exist including the lack of organizational structure support, top management and systems, a fear normally associated with the fear of losing control by management.

Some managers are uncomfortable with the quality of their employees' decisions, a fear that can lead managers to offer limited feedback, tell employees what to do and establish boundaries causing

employees to be indifferent about their jobs and organisations (Dobre, 2013). There are assumptions that whoever has power is right, imagination that one person has power to make or break a company, expecting employees to immediately accept the empowerment initiatives, presuming that employees hold the required competencies to play their new roles and being impatient with the process (Dobre, 2013). Critics of the relational approach assert that supervisors fight to accept perceived loss of control instead of attending to the psychological feelings of the workforce which does not consider the employees' view of empowerment (Choi *et al.*, 2016).

Empowerment, accountability and delegation of responsibilities are all aimed at high performance, describes their relationships and effect on performance. In an organisational chain of command, each serving officer plays the role of supervisor and subordinate, except for those at the very top most level. The arrangement needs the establishment of appropriate relationships between manager and subordinate, known as delegation-accountability relationships. Leadership remains the most consequential background influencers of employee performance. Leaders play influential roles in impacting employee proactivity. Proactive behaviour requires different contextual factors than does core task performance (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006), such as a minimum degree of autonomy (Rank, Carsten, Unger & Spector, 2007), it is considered myopic to assume that leadership behaviour that affect task performance will have the same effect on proactive performance (Martin, Liao & Campbell, 2013).

Empowerment is formulated by combining information, power, knowledge and rewards (Ukil, 2016). Power implies the capability of completing things through autonomy and delegating authority to employees. Information incorporates employees accessing information to the relevant to the organizations vision and strategies in addition to

commitment in the process of decision-making. Information contains clarification of individuals' roles and feedback from their supervisors, juniors and peers. Sharing of appropriate information, ideas and knowledge concerning employees work is a process known as knowledge sharing (Yasoithai, Jauhar, & Bashawir, 2015).

Delegation of authority and decision making empowering practices involve delegation of authority to staff with an aim of enabling them to implement decisions without intervention or supervision (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Leadership includes provision of settings that enable managers to share power with employees through expression of confidence in employees' capabilities, stating the importance in employee's job, providing more autonomy for decision-making and eliminating performance deterrents (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Empowering leadership leads to broader motivational effect beyond decision making. The influence may be by inspiring employees to establish their own goals, increasing their confidence and control in their job (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Delegation has the benefit of freeing up the supervisor's time and allows them to concentrate on issues like policy making, strategic and long-term planning deducing what is in the public interest, designing how to build future employees competence and other core functions. These are core functions in the sense that they reflect the skills of managers and workers (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Delegation is work-focused and refers to the assignment of tasks. Delegation is not always done well although managers usually practice it due to lack of courage and knowledge to delegate properly. Proper delegation develops employees' capabilities and increases their effectiveness. It can also be used to demonstrate trust and confidence in employees. Individuals who get timely feedback from their managers are considerably more effective than those who do not. Positive relation between work

participation and commitment, efficiency, improved decision making quality, desire for more work, productivity and acceptance of change has been consistently demonstrated in various studies (Hanaysha, 2016).

When delegation is not performed effectively, negative consequences can obstruct empowerment and inhibit work accomplishment. Ineffective delegation may require more time to oversee, correct evaluate and adjudicate differences among employees instead of freeing up time (Kairu & Rotich, 2015). More time may be spent to undertake tasks due to limited experience, expertise and information. Conflict and stress may escalate. Managers may find that the goals pursued by employees are mismatched with the organisational goals and may also lose control of employees. Employees may argue that any decision the manager makes alone is autocratic and unfair thus expected to participate in all decisions (Kairu & Rotich, 2015). Adherence to the chain of command is important for empowered delegation. As supervisors delegate more responsibility and authority, employees' accountability, autonomy and task identity increase. Open, timely and consistent feedback should be given to employees so that they are made aware of their performance and expected improvement if any. The relational element zeroes on alliances, reciprocated support and formation of subgroup (Christens, 2012).

Teamwork has various advantages which include improved growth, creativity and productivity in addition to encouraging creation of an environment that enables knowledge sharing among employees. Studies indicate that teamwork improves satisfaction and motivation to put higher efforts at work (Mafini & Poe, 2013). It is therefore necessary to develop employees' satisfaction and organizational performance. Working with teams empowers employees and help them develop autonomy (Abdullah, Deris, Mohamad & Tarmidi, 2012). A study conducted by Kariuki and Murimi (2015) revealed

that decisions were made by the top managers although organisations had highly formalized teams. They argued that in Kenya, employees have little expectation as they have less authority leading to low performance. This view agrees with Sahoo & Das, (2011) who argued that organisations that encourage participative decision making actively experience a positive organizational performance.

Feedback should be promptly addressed once it's received instead of waiting for review time. Customer feedback, if used as often as possible motivates and encourages employees (Dorio & Shelly, 2011). They state that most employees need to be informed of their performance as well as areas of improvement. Customer contact and feedback are important means of keeping team members involved and making them feel entrusted in the organization and ready to help the institution meet its goals. Feedback motivates employees who then work hard to ensure that customers are happy and satisfied. The employees, customers and managers have a win-win-win situation created as employee performance improves, customers are increasingly satisfied and employees are more motivated. Without customer feedback and interaction, employees lack satisfaction. Employees' knowledge of their customers' expectations result to effective employee performance is as a result (Dorio & Shelly, 2011).

Empowered employees should have accountability for outcomes and not blame the top management, other department heads, suppliers, or any other person for failing to produce anticipated results. This facilitates them to learn from their faults. Empowered employees require their performance measured through unbiased written assessments as this presents an opportunity to have feedback and to know how to improve (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Accountability is the locus of performance, responsibility and authority to decision-making in organizations. Individual and group training sustain teams (Seibert *et al.*, 2011). An employee has to feel

individually accountable for the outcomes of the tasks they do. Employees are made directly accountable for their jobs through empowerment and authority to make their own decisions. This is advantageous to companies as employees acquire part of the decision-making liability instead of attributing the responsibility to managers for all decisions (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). If empowerment lacks, employees become distrustful and hesitate to take risks. Employees that are ready to take risks learn from their mistakes, are responsible and reduce their dependence on managers.

Empowerment results are visible when employees are allowed to solve problems without waiting for their seniors' approval (Abraiz, Tabassum, Raja, & Jawad, (2012). Empowered employees decide on topics believe to be beneficial to their organisations and are expected to take responsibilities of the consequences. This responsibility meant to create a culture where employees act responsibly. Accountability is a significant component of workplaces. A lot of benefits are brought to the organizations by encouraging employees accept and take responsibility of their decisions and actions outcomes provided that the environment is supportive. Power is proportional to responsibility for employees and for their leaders. Employees are individually responsible for their actions outcomes which allow them to own decision and accept the consequences for their actions. Employees seek more involvement in decision-making, more meaningful and challenging work in their workplace (Guerre, 2004). Organizations show that they value their employees' contribution by empowering them. This inspires employees to work towards attaining the organizational objectives. They are quick to act, make decisions freely and work as a part of teams (Ramesh & Kumar, 2014).

Job characteristics were considered as skills variety, task identity, task significance and autonomy in this study. 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 (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). 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 discover more meaning in their jobs when involved throughout the process and can identify a visible outcome at the completion of the work (Mukul, Rayhan, Hoque & Islam, 2014).

Task significance is the level that an employee’s job impacts on their own lives and the society. It is the extent to which an employee understands their role in achieving the overall mission of their organisation (Lunenburg, 2013). Although task significance is expected to enable employees to find their work as more meaningful and increase their job performance,

scholars are yet to establish a clear connecting link between task significance and job performance (Grant, 2008). Autonomy implies the level to which one’s job provides independence, freedom and liberty of choice to the employee in order to decide how the work will be done and scheduled. It is essential in creating a sense of responsibility among the employees (Lunenburg, 2013). Although employees try to work within the controls of an organization, employees need some freedom to carry out certain tasks without supervision. Autonomy has become very important to people in the workplace (Mukul et al., 2014).

The independent variable in this study was relational empowerment (authority and decision making delegation, teamwork, feedback and accountability for outcomes), employee performance, the dependent variable in the study, was considered as quality of work done, quantity of work done, dependability and job knowledge as shown in figure 1.

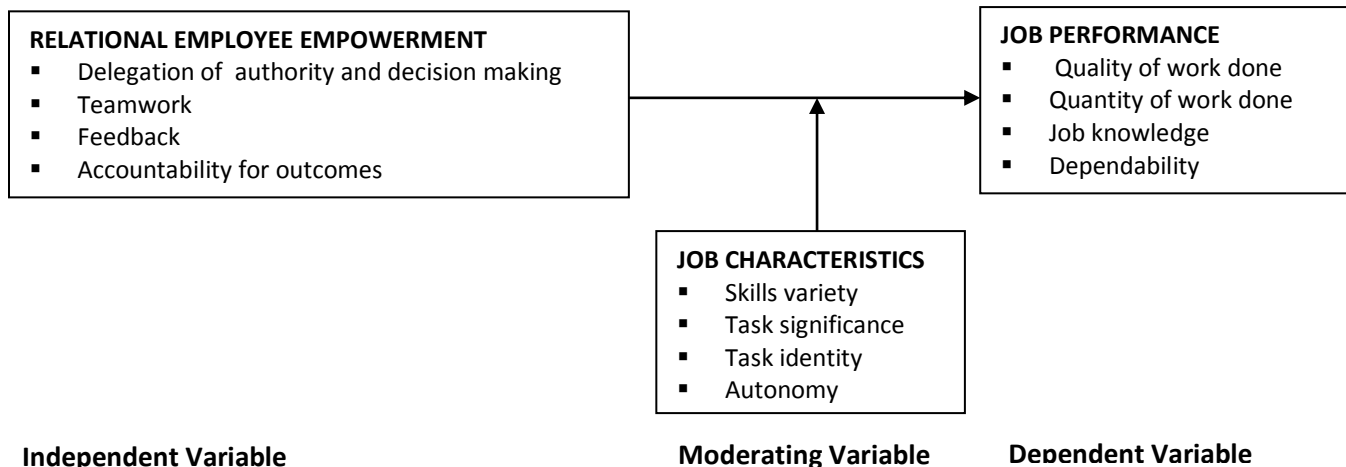


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey design and regression research design. Descriptive survey design was considered appropriate to give the descriptive statistics while regression research design was appropriate for the inferential statistics (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The target population consisted of the

1214 staff of the National Polytechnics. The study used disproportionate stratified sampling procedure in each National Polytechnic, categorizing the employees as either teaching or non-teaching staff. The Fisher’s formula was used to determine the sample arriving at the 337 respondents, study’s

sample size. The researcher assumed 95% desired confidence level.

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot P \cdot Q \cdot N}{e^2(N-1) + z^2 \cdot P \cdot Q}$$

Where:

n = the desired sample size

z = the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level

p = the proportion in the target population estimated to have the characteristic being measured (55%)

q = 1-p, the proportion in the target population estimated not to have the characteristic being measured

e = the level of statistical significance set

q = 1-05 assuming the desired accuracy at 005 level

Z-statistic is 1.96 at this level (Kothari, 2014).

Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires with semi-structured questions which would elicit adequate qualitative and quantitative data. A drop-and-pick procedure was employed. A pilot study was used to detect any composition or design fault (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Inconsistencies established in the questionnaire were amended.

Validity, which implies the instruments' accuracy, was achieved through evaluating the content intended to be measured and subjection of the tool to experts for rational analysis (Kothari, 2014). Reliability was ensured by making sure the scores were consistent across variables and eradication of errors made during administration or scoring of the instruments. Pre testing was done to ensure that errors of omission or commission were eradicated and ensured the questionnaire achieves the study's objectives. SPSS version 20 was used to compute Cronbach's alpha scores in order to check the questionnaire's reliability. To test normality and establish whether there was normal distribution of the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were carried out. A value less than 0.05 indicate normality.

A regression model of the nature $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$ was used to model the relationship between employee empowerment and job performance while the job characteristics' moderating effect on the relationship followed a regression model of the nature $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_1 * M + e$

Thus the model equations used in this study were of the nature:

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

Model 2: $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_m M + e$;

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

where,

P = Employee Performance, β_0 = Y intercept term, β_1 = Beta coefficient, X_0 = Employee Empowerment, X_1 = Relational Empowerment and e = constant term (disturbance term) and M = job characteristics (Kothari, 2014). The regression model used in this study assumed that the values of variables were normally distributed.

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. Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2011) argue that a response rate of more than 30% of the sample size gives sufficient data for generalizing the characteristics of a research problem derived from a few respondents' opinions in the target population. Based on these affirmations, the 89.6% response rate was satisfactory. This response could have been due to use of self-administered questionnaires. 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 0.801 and 0.793 for the

relational empowerment and job characteristics respectively, which were considered to be within the acceptable levels of internal consistency, indicating that the instrument was reliable. Thirteen (13) items were aggregated to a composite variable, relational empowerment which was found to have a mean of 3.1015 and a standard deviation of 1.1446 while seven (7) items were aggregated, resulting to job characteristics with a mean and standard deviation were 3.5957 and 1.2957 respectively.

The respondents were fairly distributed in terms of gender in the study. The results indicated that 51.03% were male while 49.04% the study participants were female. This portrays a fair balance of gender thus considered as a good distribution. This balance may be an indicator of success in gender mainstreaming campaigns and efforts in public service. The ratio of male to female in the National Polytechnics met the threshold stipulated by the Kenya constitution 2010 which states that 'not more than two-thirds of employees in public organisations shall be of the same gender'. 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 can be concluded to have a youthful staff. Only one employee was above sixty (60) years of age, an indication that the national polytechnics do not retain their staff after retirement. This enables the national polytechnics to employ new and younger employees.

The level of education for the respondents was sought where majority, 35.1% of the respondents indicated that they had at least a diploma while 44.74% held degrees, 14.2% possessed master's degree. Only 0.33% held a PhD. Other qualifications, which mainly consisted of middle level college certificates and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) certificates were held by 5.63%. Kabete National Polytechnic had the highest number

of Masters' holders as well as the only PhD respondent captured in this study. This may be explained by the national polytechnic's geographical location which is near the capital city of Kenya and University of Nairobi, which may have enabled the staff to study on part time basis. Eldoret polytechnic had the second highest number of masters' holders, which may also be attributed to the polytechnic's proximity to Moi University. Institutions that were not near Universities such as Kitale, Kisumu and NEP did not have any masters' or PhD holders.

Considering the period the respondent had been in their institutions, the researcher observed that majority (43.74%) of the respondents had worked for less than five years in their institutions. 34.46% had worked in their institutions between 5-10 years. Only 21.87% had an experience of above 10 years. The Eldoret and Kisumu National polytechnics had the highest number of staff (32.95% and 35.71%) who had worked in the institutions for over 10 years. This fact can be explained by the fact that the two are the oldest National Polytechnics.

Descriptive Analysis of Employee Empowerment

Descriptive statistics allow the research to describe a distribution of the scores of measurements using indices or statistics. The study findings were presented using percentages. The study sought to obtain responses regarding relational empowerment and job performance using a five point likert scale. Respondent were required to state if they strongly agreed, agreed, were not sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the provided statements. The responses were as follows:

In an effort to establish the influence of relational employee empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya, the respondents' opinions were as follows. Employees are allowed to try new and different ways solve problems as confirmed by 56.63% that agreed while 17.22% were not sure. Employees are required to follow orders

given by their seniors in organizations 31.79% strongly disagreed and 43.38% disagreed. While 53.64% agreed that employees were engaged in decision making in institution, 61.59% of the respondents agreed to have independence to organise how to do their jobs. Employees had clearly defined, frequently articulated roles and responsibilities of what was expected of them at work as indicated 54.64% agreed and 27.15% strongly agreed. The staff agreed that their co-workers provided helpful hints or problem solving advice with 56.29% agreeing and 24.17% strongly agreeing. They also agreed that their co-workers valued their colleagues' contribution and cared about their well-being as 57.95% agreed and 25.17% agreed strongly. Only 11.59% and 10.93% were not sure whether their co-workers had the commitment to perform quality work and whether they were satisfied with the team work in their department. Half of the respondent agreed and 35.1% strongly agreed that their performance was enhanced when they worked in a team. Majority of the respondents, 74.84% received guidance and feedback from their peers, juniors and seniors.

Employees were uncertain on the statement that their institutions' work environment acknowledged employees achievements and success with not sure receiving the highest percentage of 39.74%. Slightly less than half of the respondents, 48.01% agreed that managers provide frequent feedback to employees for reward improvement purposes.

Descriptive Analysis of Job Characteristics

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. Variety of tasks in employees' jobs derails their work performance as indicated by 48.67% respondents who disagreed and 36.1% who agreed. Only 15.23% were not sure. According to 46.03%

respondents, their jobs did not 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.

As indicated by 37.42%, employees could complete a piece of work without despairing. Majority of the employees had autonomy in making decisions in their jobs as indicated by 64.57% of the respondents. Most jobs require 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.

Inferential Statistics

The study sought to establish the relationship between relational empowerment and job performance after the descriptive statistical analysis. Determination of the bivariate nature of the independent and dependent variables was found to be necessary. 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 (H_0). At 5% level of significance, if p -value was < 0.05 , the null hypothesis is 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). The test is not significance ($p > 0.05$) it means that the distribution of the sample has no significant

difference with a normal distribution implying that it could be normal. However, if, the test is significant, ($p < 0.05$) the distribution is significantly different from

a normal distribution thus it is non-normal (Field, 2009). The results were as indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Normality Tests

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Job performance	.091	294	.000	.979	294	.000
Relational Empowerment	.059	294	.017	.990	294	.038
Job Characteristics	.143	294	.000	.944	294	.000

Using Shapiro-Wilk normality tests as recommended by Ghasemi & Zahediasl, (2012), relational empowerment (X_1), job characteristics (Z) and job performance (P) had p-values less 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, consequently, rejected the null hypotheses (H_{01} and

H_{02}) and concluded that the data for the variables did not have a normal distribution. Parametric procedures can be used even when the data is not normally distributed (Elliot & Woodward, 2007). To test the level of departure from normality, a Q-Q Plots were done and the results shown in figure 2, 3 and 4.

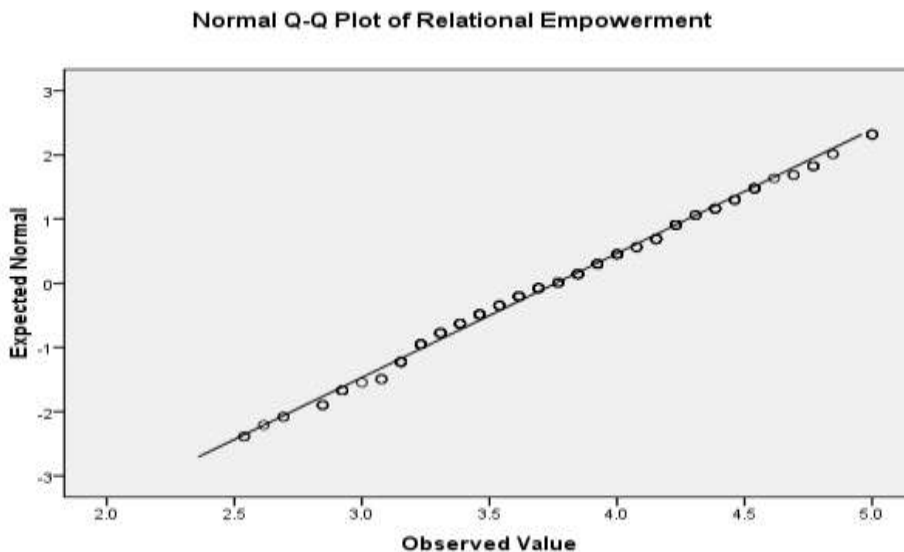


Figure 2: Normal Q-Q Plot of Relational Empowerment

Normal Q-Q Plot of Job Characteristics

Job Characteristics departure from normality was not great as can be seen from the approximation to the

line of fit. This shows that the data could be used in a regression analysis since it was near a normal distribution. This is as depicted in figure 3.

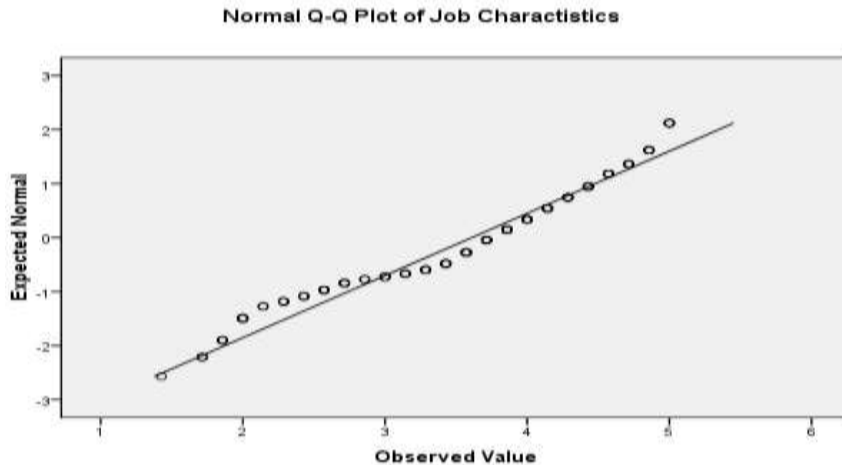


Figure 3: Normal Q-Q Plot of Job characteristics

Normal Q-Q Plot of Job Performance

The Job performance’s departure from normality was minimal as can be seen from the approximation to

the line of fit. This showed that the data could be used in a regression analysis given that it was near a normal distribution. This was as depicted in figure 4.

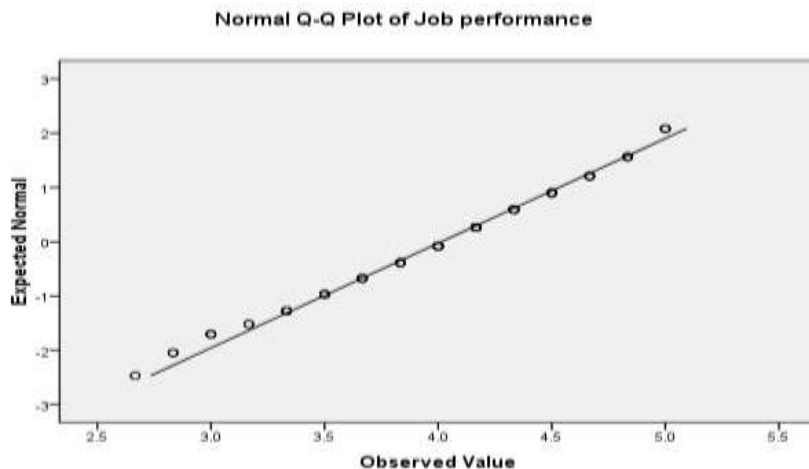


Figure 4: Normal Q-Q Plot of Job Performance

Regression Results for the relationship between relational empowerment and job Performance

Regression analysis was employed in determining the linear statistical relation between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Validity of the model was tested using F- test, while R^2 measured the model’s goodness of fit. The regression co-efficient described and outlined the nature and magnitude of the relationship between the variables under study.

The regression results revealed a positive relation between relational empowerment and job performance in the Kenyan national polytechnics. The Regression Model fitted to test the relationship was $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$. The null hypothesis (H_{01}) which was relational empowerment has no significant influence on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya ($H_0: \beta_1 = 0$) was therefore rejected ($\beta_1 = 0.793$, $t = 7.465$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$) and concluding therefore

that relational empowerment (X_1) significantly influences job performance (P).

The Model equation is $P = 3.992 + 0.741X_1$

Where, P is Job Performance, X_1 , is relational empowerment.

The beta coefficient for relational empowerment was significant ($\beta_1 = 0.793$, $t = 7.465$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). This indicated that, an increase in the relational empowerment increases job performance index by 0.741 as exhibited in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Relational empowerment and job Performance

Model Summary									
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	.738 ^a	.545	.543	.35105	.545	351.858	1	294	.000
2	.739 ^b	.545	.542	.35141	.001	.397	1	293	.529
3	.740 ^c	.547	.542	.35137	.002	1.066	1	292	.303

ANOVA ^d						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.361	1	43.361	351.858	.000 ^a
	Residual	36.231	294	.123		
	Total	79.592	295			
2	Regression	43.410	2	21.705	175.766	.000 ^b
	Residual	36.182	293	.123		
	Total	79.592	295			
3	Regression	43.542	3	14.514	117.559	.000 ^c
	Residual	36.050	292	.123		
	Total	79.592	295			

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.992	.020		195.205	.000		
	RE	.741	.040	.738	18.758	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	3.978	.031		129.673	.000		
	RE	.736	.040	.733	18.165	.000	.954	1.049
	JC	.026	.042	.025	.630	.529	.954	1.049
3	(Constant)	3.973	.031		128.060	.000		
	RE	.681	.067	.678	10.178	.000	.350	2.860
	JC	.027	.042	.026	.642	.522	.954	1.049
	RE*JC	.087	.084	.068	1.032	.303	.357	2.805

On finding out the influence of relational employee empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya, the study established that employee empowerment contributes significantly to their performance thus rejecting the null hypothesis. This agrees with the findings by Abraiz *et al.*, (2012) who concluded that human relations movement has an impact on employee empowerment. They further said that employees would react more to social circumstances as opposed to management controls. Performance based rewards, delegation of authority and recommendation systems positively affect employee performance (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). Abadi & Chegini, (2013) argue that empowerment leads to improved employee loyalty, increased creativity and initiative as well as make them more committed to their work. Hanaysha (2016) says that positive relation between work participation and commitment, efficiency, improved quality of decision making, desire for more work, productivity and acceptance of change has been demonstrated in various studies.

The Moderating Effect of Job Characteristics on the Relationship between Relational Empowerment and Job Performance

On testing the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship between X_1 and P , the three models had p -value < 0.001, p -value = 0.529, p -value = 0.303 respectively. This indicated that model $P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$ was significant while 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. The F Change for X_1 was significant (F Change = 351.858, p -value < 0.001), suggesting that, X_1 significantly influenced P . Adding JC as a predictor to the model containing X_1 , reduced the F Change substantially, however the predictor became insignificant (F Change = 175.766, p -value = 0.529). Introducing the interaction term ($X_1 M$) to the model, the model slightly improved but remained insignificant (F Change = 117.559, p -value = 0.303). This implied that job characteristics (M)

has a predictive value and moderates the relationship between relational empowerment (X_1) and job performance (P). The model equations are as follows:

$$\text{Model 1: } P = 3.992 + 0.741X_1$$

$$\text{Model 2: } P = 3.978 + 0.736X_1 + 0.026M$$

$$\text{Model 3: } P = 3.973 + 0.681X_1 + 0.027M + 0.087X_1M$$

The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to establish the influence of relational empowerment on job performance in National Polytechnics in Kenya and the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship. Descriptive survey design was employed. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The population of the study included 2993 employees in the 10 national polytechnics. Disproportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted where 337 employees were sampled.

Disproportionate stratified sampling was useful as it ensured that selected samples from each group represented the entire sample selected for the study (Kothari, 2014). On the demographic profile of the respondents, the study found that gender distribution in the national polytechnics was even. On the education level, majority of employees had diplomas and above. This made them to be considered as the right people for the study as they could easily understand empowerment dimensions. A few had masters' education. PhD holders were the least in the institutions. Majority of the employees had worked in their institutions for less than five years. Only a few had worked in their organizations for over ten years. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used in analysing the data obtained. The study tested whether relational has any influence on job performance by use of regression models. The study found that the relational empowerment dimension enhances employees' job performance in the national polytechnics.

A regression analysis was done and values obtained. Majority of the employees indicated that they were allowed to try different new ways to solve problems and were not required to follow orders given by their seniors in organizations. They were free to contribute in decision making and have independence to organise how to do their jobs. Most employees agreed to have clearly defined articulated roles and responsibilities of what is expected of them at work. The staff agreed that their co-workers provided helpful hints or problem solving advice. Co-workers valued their colleagues' involvement and cared about their well-being. Majority of the employees indicated that their co-workers have the commitment to perform quality work and were satisfied with the team work in their departments. Job performance was enhanced when employees worked in a team and received guidance and feedback from their peers, juniors and seniors. Employees were uncertain whether their institutions' work environment acknowledged employees achievements and success with not while slightly less than half respondents indicated that their managers provide frequent feedback to employees for reward improvement purposes.

The study discovered that job characteristics significantly affect the relation between employee relational empowerment and job performance. This agrees with the findings of Hadi & Adil, (2010) who stated that job characteristics are correlated with performance and job satisfaction.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, regression analysis engaged in determining the linear statistical relation between the independent and the dependent variables of the study, indicated that relational empowerment was significant and a valid predictor of job performance. The regression analysis indicated that 46.3% of corresponding variations in job performance can be predicted by employee empowerment. Relational empowerment was significant and affects performance. This implied that if the employees' relationships with supervisors, co-workers and subordinates are enhanced, job performance would increase. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study results indicated that employee relational empowerment (delegation of authority and decision making, teamwork, feedback and accountability for outcomes) contributes significantly to employees' job performance. Job characteristics (skill variety, autonomy, task significance & identity) significantly influenced the relationship between relational empowerment and job performance.

The researcher recommended that employers and policy makers should focus more on all the relational empowerment aspects as well as the job characteristics based on the findings. It is expected that relational empowerment can affect other aspects such as workplace policies and leadership strategies, which may impact on relational empowerment and job performance. Research is therefore necessary to check their impact and the resultant relationship.

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