

**EFFECTS OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ON  
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN MEDIUM CLASS HOTELS  
IN KISUMU CITY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Work performance has been identified as the significant key for both manufacturing and service industries/ or organizations to gain competitive advantage and superior productivity. Although competitive advantage is more relevant to private sector, it can be extended to public sector by including 'serving the public' because it is the ultimate objective of the public sector. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of personal characteristics on employee performance in medium class hotels in Kisumu city, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the effects of age, gender, marital status, education level, job title, years worked, job status and salary scale on employee performance. The study adopted survey research design. The target population was 187 employees in medium class hotels. Simple random sampling and stratified sampling were used for this study. Questionnaires were used as research instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics (ANOVA and Chi square) were used to analyze the data. From the ANOVA and Chi square results, it indicates that there is significance difference between age, gender, marital status, education level, job title, years worked, job status and salary scale on employee performance ( $P=0.005$ ). The management should monitor individual changes in personal characteristics to ensure they are nurtured inline with performance.

**Keywords :** ANOVA, Chi- square, job status, job title, level of education.

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## 1. Introduction

Work performance has been identified as the significant key for both manufacturing and service industries/ or organizations to gain competitive advantage and superior productivity. Although competitive advantage is more relevant to private sector, it can be extended to public sector by including 'serving the public' because it is the ultimate objective of the public sector. Study by Vermeeren *et al.* (2009) has proved that work performance could help public organization to improve service delivery. Changes in demography are one of the factors that affect work performance (Palakurthi and Parks, 2000). However, there were only a few studies that looked into the impact of demographic factors on work performance in Malaysia. Among demographic variables that had been studied were gender, age, organizational tenure, job position and ethnicity. In terms of relationship between gender and work performance, previous studies (Igbaria and Shayo, 2007 and Shaiful, A, *et al.*, 2009) reported that gender did not have a significant impact on work performance. There are little or no studies on significant differences between personal characteristics and employee performance on hospitality industry specifically in medium class hotels. An important task of human resource management is the development and retention of an efficient workforce. Therefore, applicants have to be checked, whether they are in line with the requirements of a certain job. Besides, the characteristics of employees may change over time and comparative advantages differ between young and older workers. Next to differences between young and older employees, the age-specific composition of the workforce is an important question. The productivity of a certain employee might be affected by his/her colleague. It might matter, whether this employee works together with a similar-aged colleague or with someone from a very different generation. It is important to know, whether firms with homogeneous rather than heterogeneous workforces are doing well. However, empirical evidence is rare. There are merely some cross-section studies of a very limited number of firms, which study implications of corporate age structures hence the need of this study.

Smedley and Whitten (2006) suggested that difference of age could be also a potential factor for work performance. This is in tandem with a study by Shultz and Adam (2007) which indicated that there were significant differences between age groups concerning work performance. Kujala *et al.* (2005) emphasized that younger people are poor on work performance but this is opposed by a study by Birren and Schaie (2001). Currently, Bellmann *et al.* (2003) ask managers of German

firms for age-specific capacities of employees. A majority assigns advantages for older employees for the characteristics know-how, working morale and awareness for quality. In contrast, younger employees have advantages concerning ability and willingness to learn and physical resilience. Previous work has not provided a satisfying answer concerning the addressed research hypothesis so far. The previous studies only build on a very limited number of firms and the link to firm performance is not sufficiently examined. Many studies carried out emphasize on manufacturing firms and large hotels rather than medium class hotels hence there is need for this study.

Study results reported that the average job for females was lower in stature and income than for males, yet females reported higher levels of job satisfaction. In a study among women working in the private banking sector, Metle (2001) found that job satisfaction declines with increasing levels of education. Metle (2001) argues that higher levels of education tend to increase employee goal and income expectations. Women participating in the study reported gender discrimination in seniority and qualifications. Men and women working in gender-balanced groups have higher levels of job satisfaction than those who work in homogeneous groups.

Pook, Füstös, and Marian (2003) surveyed 932 employees in Eastern Europe to explore the impact of gender bias on job satisfaction. Results suggest that women are less likely to receive help from their managers toward advancement and are less satisfied than men with the work they performed. This may be the result of being assigned less-challenging tasks, non-commensurate with their backgrounds. Using data from the U.S. National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bender, Donohue, and Heywood, 2005) reported that overall women have higher job satisfaction than men and have higher job satisfaction in workplaces dominated by women. However, men and women value job flexibility differently, and once this difference is controlled for, gender composition in the workplace play no role in determining job satisfaction of women.

Level of education was also found not to influence work performance (Linz, 2002). Beside this, McBey and Karakowsky (2001) found that there is likelihood a causal relationship between education level and work performance. Income is indeed an important motivator for work performance. A study done by Dieleman *et al.* (2003) showed that work performance is influenced by both financial and non-financial incentives. The main motivating factors for workers were appreciation by managers, colleagues and the community, a stable job and income and training.

The main discouraging factors were related to low salaries and difficult working conditions. Study done by Dieleman *et al.* (2003) was then supported by a study completed by Azman *et al.* (2009) where money acts as a moderating variable in the relationship between income distribution and pay satisfaction in the studied organization thus it will drive to better work performance. Job position is another variable that has been studied beside gender, age, income and education level. Lee *et al.* (2009) found that there is difference between top managers and middle managers in work performance. This indicates that job position has significant impact on work performance

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Research Design

The study employed survey research design. Survey design was used to describe the characteristics of a particular individual or group. It is also concerned with hypothesis formulation and testing the analysis of the relationship between variables (Kothari, 2008). Survey research design inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention from concomitant variables of independent and dependent variable (Patton, 2002).

### 2.2 Target Population

The target population for this study was employees in medium class hotels (more than 50 but less than 150 employees) in Kisumu town. Target population is an experimentally accessible population, sometimes referred to as a survey population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

### 2.3 Sampling Procedure

To select a representative sample, a researcher must first have the sampling frame. Subjects or cases selected from a sample frame form units of observation in a study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The stratified random sampling was used to select subordinate employees in relation to their departments. The population is divided into sub-populations that are individually more homogenous than the total population and then we select items are selected from each stratum to constitute a sample. Simple random sampling was used to select employees to participate in the study.

## 2.4 Data collection Instruments

For this study, questionnaire instruments and interview schedule were used to collect data. The questionnaire was structured using the Likert scale format with a five-point response scale. In this Likert scale type of questionnaires, the respondents are given five response choices. The questionnaires consisted of five parts (Kothari, 2008).

## 2.5 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which the research instruments yield consistent results or data after repeated trials (Neuman, 2000). Reliability measuring does contribute to validity, but a reliable instrument need not be a valid instrument (Kothari, 2008). The reliability of the research instruments was measured using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Cronbach Coefficient Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was computed for each item. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or over will be assumed to reflect the internal reliability of the instruments (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000). This is because likert type of questions are best tested for reliability using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha which combines all items and advices on which items to discard if it does not capture what is intended to capture (Neuman, 2000).

## 2.6 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores or measurement using a few statistics ratio. Inferential statistics (ANOVA and Chi-square) were used to test the significance difference and association respectfully between personal characteristics and employee performance. Inferential statistics deals with hypotheses testing to generalize from the sample to the population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

According to Stevens (1996) analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a data procedure that is used to determine whether there are significant differences between two or more groups of samples at a selected probability level. ANOVA was used to analyze situations in which there are several independent variables. It tells how independent variables interact with each other and what effects these interactions have on dependent variable. The ANOVA was used to test  $H_{01}$  there is significance difference between personal characteristics and employee performance.

Chi-square is a statistical technique which attempts to establish relationship between two variables both of which are categorical in nature. A chi-square technique is therefore a form of count occurring in two or more mutually exclusive categories. It compares the frequency of cases found in the various categories of one variable across the different categories of another variable (Gravetter and Wallnau 2000). The Chi-Square test was used to determine the association between personal characteristics and employee performance.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The personal characteristics of the respondents show the dominant age group of the respondents was between 20-29 years (42.2%). The gender of distribution of the respondents was 61.5% female respondents and 38.5% male respondents. The marital status of the majority of respondents was married with (33.2%). The education level of most of the respondents had secondary level of education with (37.4%). For years worked most of the respondents had worked for less than 5 years with (47.6%).

#### 3.2 Bivariate analysis on sample characteristics

##### 3.2.1. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for personal characteristics

**Table 1: ANOVA results for the personal characteristics for the survey**

ANOVA					
Age					
Employee Performance					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	32.455	3	10.818	54.633	.000
Within Groups	36.237	183	.198		
Total	68.692	186			
Gender					
Between Groups	2.936	1	2.936	8.260	.005
Within Groups	65.756	185	.355		

<b>Total</b>	<b>68.692</b>	<b>186</b>			
<b>Marital Status</b>					
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>24.529</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6.132</b>	<b>25.272</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>44.163</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>.243</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.692</b>	<b>186</b>			
<b>Education Level</b>					
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>24.529</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6.132</b>	<b>25.272</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>44.163</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>.243</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.692</b>	<b>186</b>			
<b>Years Worked</b>					
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>1.125</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.375</b>	<b>1.016</b>	<b>.387</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>67.567</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>.369</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.692</b>	<b>186</b>			
<b>Salary</b>					
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>2.726</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.909</b>	<b>2.521</b>	<b>.059</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>65.966</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>.360</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.692</b>	<b>186</b>			

The results from the analysis (Table 1) indicated that personal characteristics (age, gender, marital status, education level) has a significant effect on employee performance, age of respondents was significant ( $F = 54.635$ ,  $P = .000$ ). The gender of the respondents was significantly different on employee performance ( $F=8.260$ ,  $P= .005$ ). The marital status was significantly different on the performance, ( $F = 25.272$ ,  $P=.000$ ). The education level was significantly different on the performance, ( $F = 25.272$ ,  $P=.000$ ). The number of years worked and salary scale had no significant difference to employee performance. The years worked had no significant difference on employee performance, ( $F = 1.016$ ,  $P=.387$ ). The salary had no significant difference on employee performance, ( $F= 2.521$ ,  $P=.059$ ). The mean values for the age, gender, marital status and education level indicated that as the personal characteristics (age, gender, marital status and education level) increase in Medium class hotels in Kisumu, so did the employee performance.

### 3.2.2. Chi -square results for personal characteristics of the respondents

#### 3.2.2.1 Gender of the respondent \* education level of respondent

**Table 2: Chi square results for education level from survey**

		Education level of respondents				Total
		primary	secondary	college	university	
<b>Male</b>	Count	11	49	12	0	72
	% within gender	15.3%	68.1%	16.7%	.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	5.9%	26.2%	6.4%	.0%	38.5%
<b>Female</b>	Count	26	21	29	39	115
	% within gender	22.6%	18.3%	25.2%	33.9%	100.0%
	% of Total	13.9%	11.2%	15.5%	20.9%	61.5%
	% of Total	19.8%	37.4%	21.9%	20.9%	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 56.426, P = .000$$

The Chi- Square results of the gender of the respondents against the level of education of the respondents (Table 2) indicated that 68.1% of the male respondents had secondary level, 16.7% of the male respondents had college education, 15.5% of the male respondents had primary education and 19.4% had primary education and none of the male respondents had university education. While for the female respondents 33.9% had university education, 25.2% of the female respondents had college education, 22.6% had primary education and 18.3% of the female respondents had secondary education level. The Chi- Square tests revealed that the performance responses of employees in medium class hotels in Kisumu town was dependent on education level ( $\chi^2 = 56.426, P = .000$ ). Therefore there is significant relationship between gender and education level of the respondents. From the table 2 above there are more educated female than male in the hospitality industry. Therefore there is need to encourage more male to join in the field of hospitality to increase the competition hence productivity rate of the industry.

#### 3.2.2.2 Gender of the respondent \* years worked by the respondent



**Table 3: Chi -square results for years worked by the respondents**

		Years worked by the respondent			Total
		below 5 years	6-10 years	10-15 years	Total
<b>Male</b>	Count	46	26	0	72
	% within gender	63.9%	36.1%	.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	24.6%	13.9%	.0%	38.5%
<b>Female</b>	Count	43	35	37	115
	% within gender	37.4%	30.4%	32.2%	100.0%
	% of Total	23.0%	18.7%	19.8%	61.5%
	% of Total	47.6%	32.6%	19.8%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 30.135, P= .000$

The Chi- Square results of the gender against the years worked of the respondents (Table 3 above) indicated that 63.9% of the male respondents had worked in the organization for less than 5 years, 36.1% of the female respondents had worked for the hotel between 6-10 years and none of the male respondents had worked between 10-15 years. . For the female respondents 37.4% of the female respondents had worked for less than 5 years followed by 32.2% of the respondents who had worked between 10-15 years, 30.4% of the female respondents had worked for the hotel between 6-10 years. From the study it showed that there was a significant relationship between the gender and years worked ( $P < .5$ ). However the linear association existed between the gender and years worked ( $\chi^2$  Therefore there is need for the management to develop motivation strategies that could retain employees in the organization so as to cut down the cost of selection, recruitment and training of the employees and ensuring experienced employees in the establishment. = 30.135, P= .000). This showed that most of the male respondents do not stay in one organization for a long time compared to their counterpart female employees.

**3. 2.2.3 Gender of the respondent \* job status of the respondent**

**Table 4: Chi -square results for job status of the respondents**

		permanent	casual	contract	unknown	
<b>Male</b>	Count	0	49	11	12	72
	% within gender of the respondent	.0%	68.1%	15.3%	16.7%	100.0%
	% of Total	.0%	26.2%	5.9%	6.4%	38.5%
<b>Female</b>	Count	13	59	32	11	115
	% within gender	11.3%	51.3%	27.8%	9.6%	100.0%
	% of Total	7.0%	31.6%	17.1%	5.9%	61.5%
	% of Total	7.0%	57.8%	23.0%	12.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	7.0%	57.8%	23.0%	12.3%	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 15.138, P = .002$$

The Chi-Square results of the gender against the job status of the respondents (table 4 above) indicated that none of the male employees were permanent employees of the organization, 63.9% of the male respondents were casual employee of the hotel, 15.3% of the respondents were on contract and 16.7% of the employees didn't know their job status. In terms of the females most of employees 51.3% of the respondents were casual, 27.8% of the respondents were on contract and 11.3% of the respondents were permanent. From the study, it shows that there was a significant relationship between gender of the respondents and their job status ( $p < .05$ ). However, a linear association existed between gender and job status of the respondents, ( $\chi^2 = 15.138, P = .002$ ). Based on the results, it can be concluded that female respondents consider the importance of job status and majority have gone further of making of sure their terms of employment as opposed to their male counterpart who seem not to mind and that is why most of them do not understand their terms of employment and none is a permanent employee of the establishment.

## 3.2.2.4 Gender of the respondent \* salary scale of the respondent

Table 5: Chi -square results for salary scale of the respondents

		Salary scale of the respondent				Total
		1,000- 2,500	2501- 4000	4001- 6000	6001- 8000	
<b>Male</b>	Count	72	0	0	0	72
	% within gender of the respondent	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	38.5%	.0%	.0%	.0%	38.5%
<b>Female</b>	Count	99	1	10	5	115
	% within gender	86.1%	.9%	8.7%	4.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	52.9%	.5%	5.3%	2.7%	61.5%
	% of Total	91.4%	.5%	5.3%	2.7%	100.0%
	% of Total	91.4%	.5%	5.3%	2.7%	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 10.955, P = .012$$

The respondents indicated that 100% of the male respondents earned between 1,000- 2,500 and none of the male respondents earned between 4001-6000, earned between 6001-8000 and earned between 2501-4000. For the female respondents 86.1% of the female respondents earned between 1,000- 2,500 followed by 8.7% of the respondents earned between 2,501- 4,000, 4.3% of the female respondents earned between 4,001- 6,000 and only few 0.9% of the female respondents earned between 6001- 8,000. From the study it showed that there was a significant relationship between the gender and salary scale ( $P < .5$ ). However the linear association existed between the gender and salary scale ( $\chi^2 = 10.955, P = .012$ ). This implies that salary plays a major role in improving employee performance and hence there is need for the medium class hotels in Kisumu to work on payment imbalance between the male and female employees to ensure that they are equally paid for the work done and emphasis be put on the importance of money as a motivation factor in the hotel industry.

### Discussion

The first hypothesis which stated that personal characteristics have no effects on employee performance was rejected. From the findings it indicates that there was significant difference between personal characteristics (age, gender, marital status and education level) and employee performance. These results are clearly aligned with previous studies (Hancer and George, 2003; Rad and Yarmohammadin, 2006) which found that employees' job satisfaction was related to their demographic profiles, although surprisingly previous studies did not show a link to education. The study found that female employees tend to be more satisfied than males, and this is consistent with Hancer and George (2003) findings in restaurants. In this study, older employees showed more job satisfaction than younger employees. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Hancer and George, 2003; Rad and Yarmohammadin, 2006) which also found that job satisfaction had a relationship with age. But these findings contradict with other studies (Oshagbemi, 2003; Sarker *et al.*, 2003) which suggested that there was no age effect on job satisfaction.

### Conclusion

From the ANOVA results shows that there is significant difference between personal characteristic (age, gender, marital status and education level) and employee performance. Chi-square results, also indicates that there is significant association personal characteristic and employee performance. This implies that personal characteristics have effect on employee performance.

### Recommendations

As a recommendation for the employees working in medium class Hotels in Kisumu, it would be best for them to understand what it is that would make them more satisfied with their job. Not only would it serve as an advantage for the organization, but also for the employees themselves. By doing so, it would help encourage them to develop a happier view towards life. Employees should discuss the concerns they have in their job with their immediate superiors, and try to

negotiate ways to benefit and satisfy both parties. Indeed, the employees should try to keep an open mind to experience and to their work, so they can also maintain a happy attitude towards life. Employees may also have a desire to pursue with a higher education or to improve their performance, so that they can accomplish more tasks within the same period of time. Managers need to come up with policy guidelines on reward systems that consider Personal Characteristic especially, experience & education.

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