

**PERCEIVED FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE  
PERFORMANCE AT MACHAKOS COUNTY GOVERNMENT,  
KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other university.

Signature .....

Date .....

**Francis Kioko Kimeu**

**D61/60895/2013**

This research project has been submitted with my approval for examination to the university, as a university supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my loving wife Rose for always being a source of inspiration to me. Her believe that “tough times do not last but tough people do” keeps me going.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I begin by acknowledging the Almighty God for the motivation to go through the entire course and in particular this research project. Special thanks to my research supervisor Prof. Peter K'Obonyo for his professional guidance and my moderator Dr. Florence Muindi. My gratitude also goes to the Human resource department of Machakos county government for availing to me the much needed information and all the respondents from the county government of Machakos for their Cooperation. I appreciate my wife Rose, my parents Mr. and Mrs. Kimeu and many friends who cheered me on from the beginning. May God bless you.

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## ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a critical factor in organizational success. An effective employee is a combination of a good skill set and a productive work environment. In dealing with the concept of performance, perception becomes important because people's behavior is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself; the world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviorally important. The objective of this study is to establish the perceived factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government, Kenya. The significance of the study includes the benefits to the National government of Kenya, County governments in Kenya, members of the public and other researchers. A descriptive research design was used in this study. The target population was all the 1,300 employees of Machakos county government spread across six ministries. Stratified random sampling technique was used because of the need to group the population into strata. The data collection instrument which was used is the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A was the introduction; Section B captured the demographic information while Section C captured the factors affecting employee performance. The questionnaire was developed using a five point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to rate the extent the various perceived factors affects their performance in the county government of Machakos. Closed ended questions were used in the questionnaire and it was administered through the drop and pick later method. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentages. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages so as to present the quantitative data in form of tables, pie charts and graphs. The findings of the study revealed the perceived factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government to be training, motivation, teamwork and performance appraisals with majority of the respondents agreeing that the above factors affects their performance. Employee performance could be improved by fostering teamwork in the organization and it is therefore recommended that employees be encouraged to work as a team and through team building activities. Staff motivation affects employee performance and therefore staff should be motivated. Performance appraisals affect employee performance and the process should not be subjective but should be guided by job analysis. Employee performance could be improved by the organization providing more training opportunities to the staff. The study ends with suggestion that similar studies be conducted in different counties in Kenya and the results to be compared. It is also suggested that the study be repeated after five years to ascertain if there will be any changes in the findings.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Peters and Waterson (2004) argue that performance is a critical factor in organizational success. An effective employee is a combination of a good skill set and a productive work environment. Peters and Waterson indicates that in dealing with the concept of performance, perception becomes important because people's behavior is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself; the world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviorally important. Employee performance is affected by several factors, of which the primary ones are training, motivation, and teamwork and performance appraisals.

Rotundo and Sackett (2002) state that companies can reap the rewards of providing training for their employees because well-trained workers help increase productivity. Investing in employee training should improve worker retention rates and customer satisfaction. Effective training saves labor by reducing time spent on problem-solving and saves money in the long run by producing a better workforce. Training can also enhance morale on the job and loyalty to the company. Workers who believe their company offers excellent training opportunities are generally less likely to leave their companies within a year of training than employees with poor training opportunities (Judge, Locke and Durham, 2007)

Aichouni (2005) argues that teamwork has a dramatic effect on organizational performance. An effective team can help an organization achieve incredible results, with the output of the team far exceeding the individual talents of the team members. A team that does not work together well can cause unnecessary disruption, failed

delivery and strategic failure. Romig (1996) says that during a performance appraisal, a manager needs to take time to show the employee how his performance affects the productivity of the entire organization. When an employee understands how his performance affects the ability of others to do their jobs, it helps the employee put his own job duties into an overall company context. It helps improve the notion of teamwork among the staff, and can also encourage cooperation.

Peters and Waterson (2004) state that employee performance appraisal is an important career development tool for the manager and employee. The manager can help guide the employee on the path to corporate advancement, and the employee gets a clearer understanding of what is expected from her in her daily job duties. Bernardin (2007) points out that Performance appraisal have a wide variety of effects on employees' performance that managers must identify and understand. Employee performance appraisal can act as motivation for an employee to improve his productivity (Peters and Waterson, 2004).

Kinicki (2008) indicates that creating a comprehensive plan for employee development and giving employee goals to strive for will inspire a higher level of efficiency. Performance appraisals gives the employees a feeling of clarity and understanding that will help them better perform their job duties. Kinicki (2008) equally reveals that motivated employees perform better. If you offer commission to a salesperson, she typically tries harder to sell more. If you thank an employee for good customer service, she will likely strive to duplicate it since she feels appreciated.

### **1.1.1 The Concept of Perception**

Perception is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment (Banerjee, 1994). All perception involves signals in the nervous system, which in turn results from physical or chemical stimulation of the sense organs. The process of perception begins with an object in the real world, termed the distal stimulus and by means of light, sound or another physical process; the object stimulates the body's sensory organs. These sensory organs transform the input energy into neural activity through a process called transduction (Banerjee, 1994). Perception is sometimes described as the process of constructing mental representations of distal stimuli using the information available in proximal stimuli (Banerjee, 1994).

Psychologist Bruner (1996) has developed a model of perception. According to him people go through the following process to form opinions: When we encounter an unfamiliar target we are open to different informational cues and want to learn more about the target. In the second step we try to collect more information about the target. Gradually, we encounter some familiar cues which help us categorize the target. At this stage, the cues become less open and selective. Bruner (1996) says that we try to search for more cues that confirm the categorization of the target. We also actively ignore and even distort cues that violate our initial perceptions. Our perception becomes more selective and we finally paint a consistent picture of the target.

Smith and Mackie (2000) argue that the perceptual process allows us to experience the world around us. The authors state that perceptions help us make up our conscious experience and allow us to interact with the people and objects around us. Banerjee (1994) is of the view that perception is our sensory experience of the world around us

and involves both the recognition of environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli. Through the perceptual process, we gain information about properties and elements of the environment that are critical to our survival. Perception includes the five senses; touch, sight, taste, smell and hearing (Banerjee, 1994).

### **1.1.2 Employee Performance**

Rotundo and Sackett (2002) view employee performance as the ability of an employee to perform effectively in his job and it requires that he understands and has a complete and up-to-date job description for his position and that he understands the job performance requirements and standards that he is expected to meet. The supervisor should review the job description and performance requirements with the employee. Judge, Locke and Durham (2007) observe that sometimes an employee's performance will not be consistent with the requirements of the position. If this happens and the normal motivation, teamwork and training do not bring performance to an acceptable level, a supervisor may use the corrective action process to help constructively bring an employee's performance to an acceptable level.

Campbell (1990) defines performance as behavior. It is something done by the employee. This concept differentiates performance from outcomes. Outcomes are the result of an individual's performance, but they are also the result of other influences. In other words, there are more factors that determine outcomes than just an employee's behaviors and actions. Campbell (1990) allows for exceptions when defining performance as behavior. For instance, he clarifies that performance does not have to be directly observable actions of an individual.

Peters and Waterson (2004) are of the opinion that performance must be directed toward organizational goals that are relevant to the job or role. Therefore,

performance does not include activities where effort is expended towards achieving peripheral goals. For example, the effort put toward the goal of getting to work in the shortest amount of time is not performance except where it is concerned with avoiding lateness. Peters and Waterson (2004) observe that despite the emphasis on defining and predicting job performance, it is not a single unified construct. There are vastly many jobs each with different performance standards. Therefore, job performance is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of more than one kind of behavior.

### **1.1.3 Factors affecting Employee Performance**

Bernardin (2007) argues that training affects employee performance in an organization. Successful training depends upon a systematic approach involving a careful needs assessment, solid program design and thorough evaluation of results. Through a study Bernardin concludes that training programs should not be designed as quick fixes for every organizational problem. Instead training should be designed to meet particular needs of the organization and its employees. External training/off-the-job training should also take in to account the needs of the job market in order for the training to be effective and responsive to the job market needs (Bernardin, 2007).

Kinicki (2008) states that motivation affects employee performance in an organization. Motivation is difficult to understand because you cannot actually see it. Motivation must be inferred from one's behavior. Through a study, Kinicki found that motivated employees displayed positive behaviors than demotivated employees and performed better. Nevertheless, it is imperative that managers understand the process of motivation if they are to learn how to make employees improve performance (Kinicki, 2008). Motivation strategies should be based on positive corporate culture

that is open and invigorating. According to Bowers, Baker and Salas (1994), destructive organizational climate that is characterized by distrust, negative attitudes and lack of motivation usually lead to high employee turnover.

Teamwork affects employee performance (Aichouni, 2005). Both profit and non-profit making organizations are finding teamwork very important in their operations and especially in employee performance and the overall performance of the organizations. Many organizations that have established the culture of teamwork do operate with high quality, speed and are more economical in their operations. According to Aichouni (2005), man is unable to live on his efforts alone and he therefore requires the help of a fellow man. Consequently, teamwork in many organizations is as important as the mutual interactions of man. Politeness and respect are the first conditions for successful advancement of the team. However, they do not characterize teamwork. The important values of teamwork are communication, conflict resolution and cooperation among employees (Romig, 2006).

Performance appraisals affect employee performance (Peters and Waterson, 2004). Bernardin (2007) recommends performance systems to be maintained by monitoring performance of employees through periodic evaluations. Performance appraisal systems should be an integral part of the strategic human resource system. Data from this system should be a critical component at internal staffing decisions (promotion, retention or termination). Bernadin (2007) cites a study where he found that performance appraisals are a powerful tool for improving employee performance by discouraging ignorance at work and creating a high performance culture. The results of the performance appraisals should be communicated to the employees through feedback mechanisms.

#### **1.1.4 Machakos County Government**

According to Machakos county website ([www.machakosgovernment.com](http://www.machakosgovernment.com)) Machakos County, nicknamed ‘Macha’ was the first capital city of Kenya and now, it is an administrative county in Kenya. Data from human resource department in the county government shows that Machakos county government has a total of 1,306 employees spread across six ministries. The ministries are as follows: Ministry of Finance and Revenue Management, Ministry of Decentralized Units, County Administration and Energy, Ministry of Transport, Roads, Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Lands and Urban Development, Ministry of Health, Environment and Emergency Services and Ministry of Public Service, Labour, ICT and Co-operative Development (Machakos county government staff hand book, 2013).

According to a survey by Infotrack as at April, 2015 the county government of Machakos was found to be the best performing county government in Kenya ([www.infotrackresearch.com](http://www.infotrackresearch.com)).Machakos county government staff hand book (2013) shows that local people are mostly of the Akamba ethnic group but the county government has employees from different ethnic groups in Kenya. The hospitality industry in the region is said to be decent and the employees of the county government are equally said to be friendly ([www.machakosgovernment.com](http://www.machakosgovernment.com)). The Government of Machakos offers adequate highly skilled labour, skilled labour, semi-skilled labour and unskilled labour (Machakos county government staff hand book, 2013).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Robbins (2004) views perception as a process by which an individual organizes and interprets their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their work environment. Smith and Mackie (2000) argue that individual perception is not necessarily based on reality, but is merely a perspective from the individual's view of a situation. Bruner (1996) indicates that positive perceptions by employees will boost their morale leading to increased job productivity, satisfaction, lower turnover, reduced absenteeism and improved quality of service while negative perceptions will have the opposite outcome.

According to Bernardin (2007), performance appraisals affect employee performance by enabling employees know what is expected of them on the job and measuring the actual performance against the expected performance. Grant (1996) indicates that training helps employees understand what they actually experience and see at workplace. Batt (2002) observes that motivation brings high employee involvement in organization activities and this enhances the perceptions of employees since they feel valued by the organization. Teamwork is influenced by one's psychological state and brings common commitment to performance hence affecting employee performance (Grant, 2002).

Machakos county government has consistently been ranked by research institutions such as Infotrack ([www.infotrackresearch.com](http://www.infotrackresearch.com)) as the leading county in service delivery despite the challenges facing county governments in Kenya. Luis, David and Robert (2004) argue that an organization is only as good as its employees .The high ranking could be an indication of good service delivery by its employees and hence the researcher is curious to investigate perceived factors affecting employee

performance at Machakos county government, Kenya. The researcher believes that since county governments are new in Kenya then research needs to be conducted to provide information on perceived factors affecting employee performance at the county governments in Kenya.

A study conducted by Ikemefuna (2012) on workers perceptions of their performance in selected private organizations in Lagos, Nigeria using a survey research design found that workers have an optimistic view of their performance when training and motivating factors are available. Tensay (2014) in a research on effects of employees' perceptions of their work outcome in selected auditing firms in France ,using qualitative and quantitative research design, found that employee perceptions had positive and significant relationship with their work outcomes. Purang (2011) conducted a study using qualitative and quantitative research design on employee perceptions of performance: A comparative study on Indian private banks and found that employees from banks with motivation strategies had greater satisfaction level with their performance.

Center for advanced human resource studies (AHRS) conducted a study in 2011 on how employees perceive what motivates their performance in private companies. The study used descriptive research design and the findings revealed that employees were more motivated when they believed that a company's practices were concerned with the employees' well-being.

Wainaina (2014) researched on factors affecting perceptions of performance in Kenyan banks and found that motivation, training, career development and recognition were the major factors. The study used descriptive research design. Kiprop and Yego (2014) in a study on analysis of employees' perceptions of their

performance in Kenyan private universities: A case of Catholic university found that employees who think positively perform better than their colleagues. The study used descriptive research design.

The researcher did not find any studies focusing on factors affecting perceptions of performance among employees in the county governments in Kenya. All the studies reviewed were conducted in the private sector. This study seeks to fill the knowledge gap identified above by seeking answers to the question: What are the perceived factors affecting employee performance at Machakos county government, Kenya?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of the study is to establish the perceived factors affecting employee performance at Machakos county government, Kenya.

### **1.4 Value of the Study**

Information from the study could be used by county governments in Kenya to understand the perceived factors affecting employee performance in the devolved system. This information could be used by the county governments in formulating the necessary human resource policies and strategies.

The National government of Kenya provides resources to county governments to deliver their services. Part of the resources is used in payment of salaries to the county government employees. The information from this research could help manage the wage bill dilemma by matching the wage bill to employee productivity due to an understanding of perceived factors affecting employee performance at the county governments in Kenya.

The information from the study could add value to the public/citizens of Kenya following improved performance of the county governments through employees who can provide superior services. This public would be proud of highly performing county governments which they overwhelmingly voted for in 2010.

The information from the study could be used by other researchers who may want to carry out similar studies or related studies in future as it will assist them gain more insight to the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Cooper and Schindler (2006) say that literature review examines recent or historically significant research studies, company data or industry reports that acts as a basis for the proposed study. This chapter contains the theoretical foundation of the study, factors affecting perception and perceived factors affecting employee performance at Machakos county government employees. The perceived factors to be reviewed are training, motivation, teamwork and performance appraisals.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study**

The study is grounded on the attribution theory.

##### **2.2.1 Attribution Theory**

Attribution Theory is a theory about how people explain things. It is a causal explanation of an event or behavior. Weiner (1985) of the University of California at Los Angeles developed a comprehensive and extensive model of human attributions. Weiner's model is particularly informative in research on students learning in school settings. In his model, Weiner outlined the processes through which learners form causal beliefs (Weiner, 1985). A basic assumption of Weiner's model of attributions is that learners are affected by both environmental factors such as characteristics of the students' home or school and by personal factors such as prior experiences and prior knowledge. These background variables affect the types of attributions that individuals are likely to make.

Weiner (1985) observes that when an achievement-related event occurs such as a student fails an examination especially if the outcome was unexpected, the learner

will undertake an attributional search, trying to understand what happened. Weiner indicates that the perceived cause of the event is important regardless of any objective explanation because whatever a learner perceives as being the cause of the event will affect their future motivation toward engagement with similar tasks. For example, suppose a group of students performs poorly on an examination because of poor instruction. Those individuals who attribute their failure to poor teaching will have a different level of motivation in subsequent examinations than those who attribute their failure to their own lack of innate ability (Weiner, 1985).

People commonly attribute success to skill, luck or chance. They tend to react to situations based on what they think caused the event (Smith and Mackie, 2000). Just as perceptions can be faulty, attributions can be inaccurate as well. Organizations can ensure people attribute actions more effectively by providing diversity training, teamwork, motivation and objective performance appraisals. This helps prevent a hostile work environment for people from different cultures. By training people to make more accurate attributions, daily operations run more smoothly. This helps reduce faulty attributions (Smith and Mackie, 2000).

### **2.3 Factors affecting Perception**

Bruner (1996) states that physiological factors come from the physical environment and the ways we are different from each other. Age, or the older we are, allows for greater experience and scope, and these developmental differences shape our perceptions. Health, exhaustion, and hunger also affect our perception and communication. Other physiological factors influence perceptions, including biological cycles like menstrual cycles, body temperature, alertness and stress tolerance (Bruner, 1996).

Mackie (2000) says that how we feel at the time, or our mood, can have a significant effect on how we view people and events. This is psychological factor. Although mood may be a temporary condition, our self-concept, or the way we see and feel about ourselves, has long-term influence on how we perceive others and their behaviors. Perception is a subjective, active, and creative process in which we interpret what we sense by assigning meaning to sensory information through which we understand ourselves and others (Mackie, 2000).

Banerjee (1994) observes that our position in society shapes our view of society and individual members. This is social factor. Our socioeconomic level, family background, and position in the community all will influence our perception of others. Our occupational role, perception of that role by society, and educational background influence how we see things around us. Our gender and relational roles, such as family members and friends, are perceived differently than others. We also are strongly influenced by our culture and its interpretation, organization and negotiation (Banerjee, 1994).

## **2.4 Perceived Factors affecting Employee Performance**

The following factors will be reviewed in this section: Training, employee motivation, teamwork and performance appraisals.

According to Jackson (2007), training is a process through which individuals are assisted to learn a skill or a technique. Graham and Bennet (2008) state that training has an important function of utilization and motivation of organizational employees. Bernardin (2007) says that training is a systematic, intentional process of developing specific skills and influencing behavior of organizational members such that their resultant behavior contributes to organizational effectiveness. Bernardin continues to

define training as any attempt to improve employee performance on a currently held job or one related to it. Training has been viewed positively by employees and about two-thirds of employees, regardless of age and gender, view training as important in employee performance (Bernardin, 2007).

Grant (2002) is of the view that capacities of employees are a function of how effectively firms build and utilize their stocks of explicit and tacit knowledge. He argues that training programmes are intended to develop knowledge based performance capacities. Grant continues to say that training helps employees understand what they actually experience and see at workplace. If employees understand what they experience and see at workplace they are likely to be more productive than when they do not understand what they see and experience at work. According to Spender (1996) the management of knowledge requires both the development and deployment of a firm's stock of knowledge. The stock includes both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Luis, David and Robert (2004) explains that explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be readily observed and thus codified, shared, and controlled by the organization. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is derived from experience and is largely unobservable except as the result of its application. Kinicki and Williams (2008) indicates that when organizations are hiring they always try to get people whose qualifications match the requirements of the job. Quite often, however, there are gaps in what the employees need to know and what they know. These gaps are filled by training. The authors argue that training can either be on-the-job (internal) training which is carried out within the organization setting or off-the-job (external) training where employees receive training outside the organization premises.

Grant (2002) holds that training is the overwhelming important productive resource. Indeed the value of people lies primarily in the fact that they embody knowledge. Grant makes the case that the management of knowledge through training is largely one of the ways through which organizations are able to learn and adapt more quickly than competitors. Chruden (1998) states that training is important in building up an individual up to a satisfactory level and passing knowledge and skills necessary for effective employee performance. Chruden views training as investing in people to enable them perform better and to empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities. Employees receive training from schools, colleges, universities and even on-job training. Staff training improves employee performance by equipping them with knowledge and skills necessary to perform their work (Rousseau, 2001).

Baldwin and Peters (2001) demonstrated that innovative firms are more likely to support training activities than non-innovative firms, but the former have a preference for on-the-job training. Innovative firms particularly favor acquiring experience in the context of learning by doing to enhance the ability of employees to innovate and solve problems. Chowhan (2005) concluded that the existence and intensity of training activities in a firm depend on the level of technological competency that exists in that firm. Leckie (2001) indicates that small businesses provide their employees with less training than larger businesses.

Betcherman, McMullen and Davidman (1998) observed that there are a number of studies which indicate that employee training has a positive impact on corporate performance. They generally test the hypothesis that, by improving the competency of employees, training also improves the employees' perceptions, which is reflected in an improvement in the firm's performance. Betcherman, McMullen and Davidman

(1998) concluded that firms that have training programs tended to perform better in terms of productivity, revenues, profitability, viability and prospects.

Kinicki and Williams (2008) define motivation as the psychological process that arouses and directs people's goal-oriented behavior. They ask why people do the things they do and they answer that they are mainly motivated to fulfill their wants and their needs. Kinicki and Williams (2008) continue to suggest that motivation can result from two types of rewards. First is extrinsic reward which is the pay off, such as money a person receives from others for performing a given job. The second is intrinsic reward which is the satisfaction in performing the task itself and a feeling of accomplishment. Batt (2002) says that there is now substantial research showing that motivation brings high employee involvement in organization activities and this enhances the perceptions of employees since they feel valued by the organization.

Grant (2000) argues that capacities of employees are not only the product of their competencies but also of the motivation and opportunities to utilize those competencies. He says that Motivation can come in the form of financial incentives, the opportunity to get involved in company projects, a career path that leads to growth and direct involvement in management. Grant observes that human resource management literature has largely emphasized the use of performance-based pay, feedback, employment security, recognition, teamwork and training to motivate employees. Motivation can create a productive work force but lack of motivating factors can leave employees searching for reasons as to why they should give their maximum efforts in their work (Kinicki and Williams, 2008).

Staff motivation improves employee performance by creating a favorable environment for work and gives employees positive attitude and morale towards work

(Grant, 2002). Luis, David and Robert (2004) say that the job of a manager in the workplace is to get things done through employees. To do this the manager should be able to motivate employees. But that's easier said than done since motivation practice and theory are difficult subjects touching on several disciplines. David and Robert (2004) argue that in spite of enormous research, basic as well as applied; the subject of motivation is not clearly understood and more often than not poorly practiced. To understand motivation one must understand human nature itself. And there lies the problem.

David and Robert (2004) state that human nature can be very simple, yet very complex too. An understanding and appreciation of this is a prerequisite to effective employee motivation in the workplace and therefore effective management and leadership. Quite apart from the benefit and moral value of an altruistic approach to treating colleagues as human beings and respecting human dignity in all its forms, research and observations show that well motivated employees are more productive and creative (Luis, David and Robert, 2004). There is an old saying that you can take a horse to the water but you cannot force it to drink; it will drink only if it is thirsty.

Whether it is to excel on the workshop floor or in the 'ivory tower' people must be motivated or driven to it, either by themselves or through external stimulus (Bernardin, 2006). Are they born with the self-motivation or drive? Yes and no. If no, they can be motivated, for motivation is a skill which can and must be learnt. Bernardin cites content approach to motivation. The content approach to motivation focuses on the assumption that individuals are motivated by the desire to fulfill inner needs. Delarue (2003) says that since motivation influences productivity, supervisors need to understand what motivates employees to reach peak performance. Delarue argues that it is not an easy task to increase employee motivation because employees

respond in different ways to their jobs and their organization's practices.

Delarue (2003) says that motivation is the set of processes that moves a person toward a goal. Thus, motivated behaviors are voluntary choices controlled by the individual employee. Motivation is basically concerned with the question 'why?' of human behavior (Delarue, 2003). It seeks to understand why employees take certain actions in preference to others. It focuses on why employees do things, why do they differently and why some people are more hardworking than others. Motivation can thus be seen as forces or drives within an individual that activate him or moves him to action (Bahl, 1996). Philippidou (2007) says that the way that a task is designed and employees perform it has an important effect on their satisfaction. When an employee is positioned in a job that he has the capabilities to take initiatives and organize it, he will experience job satisfaction.

According to Delarue (2003) it is difficult to arrive at a single definition of teamwork. Several concepts exist and researchers in the field of working conditions differ in their view of what teamwork actually means. The general meaning of team is groups of persons who have at least some collective tasks and where the team members are authorized to regulate mutually the execution of these collective tasks (Bernardin, 2006). Bernardin indicates that teamwork benefits employee performance by fostering higher group cohesion. He says that working in teams also causes workers to feel more responsible for their own and each other's performance. According to Kinicki and Williams (2008) there are many reasons why teamwork is now the cornerstone of progressive management with the main reason being that they improve employee performance by creating a sense of commitment.

Katzenbach and Smith (2005) reaffirms that the essence of teamwork is common commitment to performance. Kipsang (2005) elaborates how team building occurs. He says that team building normally undergoes five stages of development. Forming is the first stage when members get acquainted to one another. At storming stage, members want to exert greater influence over the process and some level of conflicts emerges. At norming stage, team members make effort to discover what standards of performance are acceptable. At the performing stage, the team is ready to be productive and work on the task assigned. The last stage is adjourning where the group comes to an end (Kipsang, 2005). As observed by Lepak and Snell (1999), effective firms are good at creating climates that encourage and condition employees to value and to believe there is a need to continually work together as a team.

Lepak and Snell (1999) state that teamwork gives firms competitive advantage since they are able to build dynamic capabilities and avoid the erosion of their stocks of knowledge. This is because the employees continually learning from each other. Grant (2002) states that the more employees value teamwork the higher their perceptions can be expected to be positive over time provided they receive necessary support from management. Grant (2002) is of the opinion that teamwork is influenced by one's psychological state. He says that employees who believe they are more or less able to perform their jobs well, will likewise perceive that they contribute more or less to the success of their work areas than employees who do not perform their jobs as well.

Many activities of any organization are becoming complex daily due to advanced technology and it therefore calls for teamwork (Rufus, 1998). According to Ptuff and Huddleston (2003), there is need for teamwork in all types of organizations including non-profit making organizations. The teams should be taught how to improve their

performance by improved skills acquisition through training. In addition, through teamwork, employees obtain the necessary skills for better individual performance and this improves the employees' perceptions towards work (Stevens and Campion, 1994). It is possible for team participants to learn the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for working adequately in a team (Frobel and Marchington, 2005).

Frobel and Marchington states that teamwork increases employee perceptions towards work by creating an environment of cooperation and hence employees learn from each other. Lack of teamwork reduces employee perception towards work since they do not share important strategies for improving performance and creates an environment of conflicts among employees (Boxall, 2007). Cohen and Manion (1999) argue that there are enough reasons for adoption of teamwork in non-profit making organizations especially regarding performance. According to the authors, organizations that have embraced teamwork have recorded increased employee perceptions towards work issues, problem solving and stimulation of new growth in the organization. Thompson and Thompson (2009) note that many companies use the self-directed format of teamwork to perform better. In this format, the group leader is either assigned by the management or elected by the members.

Thompson and Thompson (2009) state that the team leader must be effective for performance. This is because as Crosby (2001) admits, it is not easy to teach individuals on how to work in a team and therefore a team leader should have problem solving skills. Bacon and Blyton (2006) say that teamwork skills enhance communication and interpersonal relationship in teams while enhancing employee perceptions towards work. According to Graham and Bennet (1998), what works in an organization in reaching its goals is not an individual, but properly integrated

teamwork. The authors say that the main reason is that considering the vastness and the very nature of the work that an organization engages in, it is not possible for any one individual to even think of taking the entire load upon his own shoulders (Grant, 1996).

According to Luis, David and Robert (2004), performance appraisal is the identification, measurement and management of the human resource performance in an organization. The authors say that organizations conduct appraisals for administrative purposes and to ascertain employee performance. Employee performance appraisal can also be seen as a process of assessing, summarizing and developing the work performance of an employee in an organization in order to improve employee productivity in the organization (Bernardin, 2006). Barney (2001) indicates that the much of the employee performance literature and the emphasis of developing employee competencies and improving employee performance are derived from the resource-based perspective of business strategy which is used for achieving business goals.

Under the resource-based perspective, competitive advantage is derived from a firm's physical, human, and organizational resources (Barney, 2001). Barney says that the human resource controls all the other resources and thus should be continually checked to ensure it is performing according to set standards. Kinicki and Williams (2008) say that performance appraisals help employees understand how they are doing in relation to objectives and standards of their job. The feedback given to the employee will help them improve their perceptions towards their work. According to Beardwell and Holden (2001), a good performance appraisal system will identify performance standards and core competencies and communicate them to employees.

Beardwell and Holden (2001) state that periodical appraisals help the company to compare employees' performance with desired performance and to take apt decisions for further improvement. High performance may merit salary increment, bonus or promotion (Bradley, 1992). Bernardin (2006) says that performance appraisals are used to describe how well individuals perform their work. Bernardin (2006) argues that the actual performance appraisal instrument should have been developed from work analysis and should be linked to the job description. Bernardin views performance appraisal as systematic evaluation of employee job performance by their supervisors or others who are familiar with the employee's performance. Job analysis is used to develop criteria for performance appraisals (Bacon and Blyton, 2006).

Bacon and Blyton (2006) say that honesty is the key to making a performance evaluation a valuable tool for all involved. It is important that you present an objective and accurate analysis of an employee's performance (Batt, 2002). Batt indicates that performance appraisals help in identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development. The success of performance appraisals depends on the frequency of feedback concerning the performance of the employees. According to Levine and Wingert (1996), feedback should be provided on a regular basis as it will improve employee perceptions towards their work. Collins and Smith (2006) say that performance appraisal systems began as simple methods of income justification.

The process was firmly linked to material outcomes. The traditional emphasis on reward outcomes was progressively rejected (Levine, and Wingert, 1996). Performance appraisals affect employee perceptions towards work by enabling the employees know what is expected of them on the job and measuring the actual

performance against the expected performance (Grant, 2002). Grant (2002) indicates that employees work hard to achieve set targets. Lack of performance appraisals may reduce employee performance since the employees may relax knowing they will not be evaluated against any set targets (Colbert, 2004). Performance appraisals offer a valuable opportunity to focus on work activities and goals, to identify and correct existing problems (Grant, 2002).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed description of the methodology that will be used in the study. It describes the research design, target population, sample design, data collection and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Ogula (2005) describes a research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. A descriptive research design was used in this study. Descriptive research design is used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research design answers the question what, who, where and how (Borg and Gall, 2003).

#### **3.3 Population**

According to Ogula (2005), a population refers to any group of institutions, people or objects that have common characteristics. Borg and Gall (2003) defines population as the complete collection to be studied. The target population was all the 1,300 employees of Machakos county government. This figure was obtained from Machakos county government human resource department.

#### **3.4 Sample Design**

Owens (2002) says the main factor to consider in determining the sample size is the need to keep the sample size manageable enough. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003)

argue that a sample size of between 10 and 30% is a good representation of the target population. A sample size of 10% was used to ensure that the sample size is manageable enough. Stratified random sampling procedure will be used by grouping the employees into their respective ministries and then randomly selecting respondents from the departments. This is as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Sample size (10% of Target Population)</b>
Health, Environment and Emergency	304	30
Decentralized Units, Administration and Energy	292	29
Transport, Roads, Public Works and Housing	256	26
Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Lands and Urban Development	218	22
Public Service, Labour, ICT and Co-operative Development	132	13
Finance and Revenue Management	102	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>130</b>

**Source: (Machakos county government- Human Resource Department, 2015)**

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The researcher used primary data which was collected using a questionnaire developed to address the research objective. Owens (2002) says that a questionnaire has the potential to reach out to a large number of respondents within a short time. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A was the introduction; Section B captured the demographic information while Section C captured the factors affecting employee performance. The questionnaire was developed using a five point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to rate the extent the various perceived factors affects their performance in the county government of Machakos. Closed ended questions were used in the questionnaire and it was administered through the drop and pick later method.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

According to Williamson (1999), data analysis is the process of packaging the collected data and putting it in order so that the findings can be easily communicated. The filled questionnaires was checked for accuracy, completeness and then analyzed. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentages. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages so as to present the quantitative data in form of tables, pie charts and graphs. The analysis sought to meet the research objective.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussion. The data from the completed questionnaires was summarized and presented in form of frequency distribution tables, mean and percentages.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The analysis of the response rate was as follows

**Table 4.1 : Response Rate**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Response	120	92
No Response	10	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source : Research Data, 2015**

Table 4.1 shows that there was 92% response rate representing 120 respondents out of the 130 respondents given questionnaires. This response rate was adequate for data analysis and conforms to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 70% and above is adequate.

#### 4.3 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic information considered in the study comprised of gender, age, working experience, highest level of education and the respondents Ministry.

### 4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

Gender of the respondents is presented in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2: Gender of the Respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	84	70
Female	36	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

From table 4.2 it is clear that majority (70%) of the respondents were male and 30% female.

### 4.3.2 Age Category of Respondents

The analysis of the age category of respondents is as follows

**Table 4.3: Distribution by Age Category of Respondents**

Category (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30	29	24
30-40	41	34
41-50	32	27
Above 50	18	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

Table 4.3 shows that the majority of the respondents (34%) were between 30-40 years of age followed by 41-50 years which had 27%. 24% of the respondents were below 30 years. The minority were above 50 years with 15% of the respondents.

### 4.3.3 Ministry of the Respondents

The analysis of the Ministry of the respondents is as follows

**Table 4.4: Distribution of the Respondents by Ministry**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Health, Environment and Emergency	28	23
Decentralized Units, Administration and Energy	28	23
Transport, Roads, Public Works and Housing	24	20
Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Lands and Urban Development	20	17
Public Service, Labour, ICT and Co-operative Development	12	10
Finance and Revenue Management	8	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

As shown in Table 4.4, majority of the respondents were from the ministry of Health, Environment and Emergency with 23% and the ministry of Decentralized Units, Administration and Energy equally producing 23% of the respondents. This was followed by Transport, Roads, Public Works and Housing with 25% of the respondents and Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Lands and Urban Development with 17% of the respondents. Ministry of Public Service, Labour, ICT and Co-operative Development produced 10% of the respondents and the minorities were from the Ministry of Finance and Revenue Management which produced 10% of the respondents.

#### **4.3.4 Work Experience in the Organization**

Work experience of respondents was analyzed and the findings obtained are presented in Table 4.5

**Table 4.5: Distribution by Work Experience of the Respondents**

<b>Working experience (years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 10	46	38
10-20	32	27
21-30	27	22
Above 30	15	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

As indicated in the Table 4.5, it is clear that majority of the respondents (38%) had worked in the organization for below 10 years. This was followed by 27% who had worked for below 10-20 years. 22% of the respondents had worked for

21-30 years while the minorities were 13% who had worked for above 30 years.

#### **4.3.5 Level of Education of the Respondents**

The results of the analysis of the level of education of the respondents are presented in Table 4.6

**Table 4.6: Composition of the Respondents based on Level of Education**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Secondary	23	19
College	44	37
University	53	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

Table 4.6 shows that the majority of the respondents (44%) had university degrees, followed by college level of education with 37% of the respondents. The minority were those with primary education at 19%.

#### **4.4 Factors affecting Employee Performance at Machakos county government**

In this section the perceived factors affecting employee performance at Machakos county government, Kenya, was analyzed. The scale of 1 to 5 was used with : 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree ;3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The results are presented in table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Rating Factors affecting Employee Performance**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Training affects my performance in the organization	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.61513</b>
Motivation affects my performance in the organization	<b>4.4</b>	<b>0.51092</b>
Teamwork affects my performance in the organization	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.66779</b>
Performance		
Appraisals affect my performance in the organization	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.87955</b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>.</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2015**

Table 4.7 above shows that the respondents agreed that training affects their performance in the organization with the mean being 4.3 out of 5. The

respondents also agreed that motivation affects their performance with the mean being 4.4; Team work affects employee performance as agreed to by the respondents with a mean of 4.3 and Performance appraisals equally affect employee performance as agreed by the respondents with the mean being 4.2. The grand mean was 4.3.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

The study sought to establish the perceived factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government, Kenya. The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which various factors affect their performance. Training is perceived to affect employee performance with a mean of 4.3 out of 5. Training means investing in people to enable them perform better and to empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities. When employees learn they improve their performance. Bernadin(2007) cites a study by William Cooke from Michigan State University conducted in 2007 with a sample of 888 employees across eight automotive supplier firms which lends credence to the underlying assumptions made about employee training. According to the findings, employee's performance is positively and strongly associated with climates within which employees place greater value on training.

The respondents perceived motivation to affect their performance with a mean of 4.4 out of 5. Capacities of employees are not only the product of their competencies but also of the motivation and opportunities to utilize those competencies. Staff motivation improves performance by creating a favorable environment for work and positive attitude towards work. Through a study, Kinicki (2007) also found that motivated employees displayed positive behaviors

than demotivated employees and performed better.

The mean for teamwork was 4.3 out of 5 which shows that the respondents perceive teamwork to affect employee performance. Working in teams causes workers to feel more responsible for their own and each other's performance. Teamwork increases employee performance by creating an environment of cooperation and hence employees learn from each other and can easily improve their performance. Collins and Smith (2006) developed a structural model of the effects of teamwork on firm performance. They conducted a research and found out that firm performance is strongly and positively affected by the extent of teamwork in the organization.

The results of the study revealed that performance appraisals affect employee performance with a mean of 4.2 out of 5. Performance appraisals help employees understand how they are doing in relation to the set objectives and standards of their job. The feedback given to the employee will enable them improve their performance. Bernadin (2007) study on effects of performance appraisals also found that performance appraisals are a powerful tool for improving employee performance by discouraging ignorance and creating a high performance culture.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives the summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The objective of the study was to establish the perceived factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government, Kenya. Training is perceived to affect employee performance with most of the respondents, 47%, strongly agreeing that training affects their performance. 40% agreed that training affects their performance while 10% neither agreed nor disagreed. The minority, 3%, disagreed that training affects their performance.

Motivation is perceived to affect employee performance with most of the respondents, 53%, strongly agreeing that motivation affects their performance. 33% agreed that training affects their performance while 14% neither agreed nor disagreed. The mean was 4.4 which means that the respondents agreed that training affects their performance. Teamwork is perceived to affect employee performance with most of the respondents, 47%, strongly agreeing that teamwork affects their performance. 37% agreed that training affects their performance while 13% neither agreed nor disagreed. The minority, 3%, disagreed that teamwork affects their performance.

Performance appraisals are perceived to affect employee performance with most of the respondents, 43%, strongly agreeing that performance appraisals affect

their performance. 40% agreed that performance appraisals affect their performance while 7% neither agreed nor disagreed. The findings revealed that training, motivation, teamwork and performance appraisals affect employee performance in Machakos county government, Kenya.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The findings lead to the following conclusion: Employee training is associated with higher levels of employee performance while lack of employee training leads to lower levels of employee performance. It implies the higher the level of staff motivation, the higher the level of employee performance and vice versa. The higher the level of teamwork the higher the level of employee performance and the lower the level of teamwork, the lower the level of employee performance. Performance appraisals influence higher levels of employee performance while the absence of performance appraisals leads to lower levels of employee performance.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations from this study;

That employee performance could be improved by fostering teamwork in the organization and it is therefore recommended that employees be encouraged to work as a team and through team building activities.

That staff motivation affects employee performance and therefore staff should be motivated. Some motivation strategies could include conducive working conditions, fair wages and salaries, standard hours of work and job security for efficient and committed employees.

That performance appraisal affect employee performance and the process should not be subjective but should be guided by job analysis.

That employee performance could be improved by the organization providing more training opportunities to the staff. Training should be based training on needs assessment.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The faced time constraints since the University requires completion of the research project within a specified time period, hence creating a short deadline for data collection and analysis. Nevertheless, the researcher managed to collect data from the respondents with ease through the help of research assistants.

Some of the respondents were reluctant to give information freely fearing that the information being sought might be used against them or portray a negative image about the county. The researcher handled the challenge by carrying an introduction letter from the University and assured the respondents that such information given was to be treated confidentially and it was to be used purely for academic purpose.

### **5.6 Suggestions for further Research**

The study focused on establishing the perceived factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government. It is suggested that similar studies be conducted in different counties in Kenya and compare the results. The study can also be repeated after five years to ascertain if there will be changes in the findings. There is need for further research to capture the unexplained variables which may affect the employee performance.

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[www.machakosgovernment.com/machakosprofile](http://www.machakosgovernment.com/machakosprofile)

[www.infotrackresearch.com](http://www.infotrackresearch.com)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Letter of Introduction



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**MBA PROGRAMME**

Telephone: 020-2059162  
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P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE 1/09/2015

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The bearer of this letter FRANCIS KIOKO KIMEU  
Registration No. D61/60895/2013

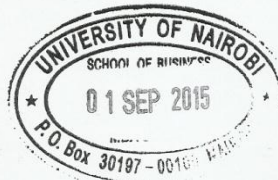
is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

**PATRICK NYABUTO**  
**MBA ADMINISTRATOR**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**



## **Appendix II: Questionnaire**

### **Section A: Introduction**

You are kindly requested to respond to the following questions to aid in the investigation of factors affecting employee performance in Machakos county government. Your response will be treated as confidential.

### **Section B: Demographic Data**

#### **1. Kindly indicate your Ministry below**

.....

#### **2. Kindly Tick your gender**

- (a) Male
- (b) Female

#### **3. Please Tick your age category (years)**

- (a) Below 30
- (b) 30-40
- (c) 41-50
- (d) 51-60
- (e) Above 60

#### **4. Please tick your work experience in the organization in years**

- (a) Below 10
- (b) 10-20
- (c) 21-30
- (d) Above 30

#### **5. Kindly tick your highest level of education**

- (a) Primary
- (b) Secondary

(c) College

(d) University

(e) Other

**Section C: Factors affecting Employee Performance**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? In each case, please tick only one box against each statement. The scale of 1 to 5 has the following meaning

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Training affects my performance in the organization					
Motivation affects my performance in the organization					
Teamwork affects my performance in the organization					
Performance Appraisals affect my performance in the organization					

**The End**

*Thank You for Your Response*