

The Influence of Person-Organization Fit during Recruitment and Selection Processes on Employee Performance in County Governments in Kenya

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Abstract: Recent developments within organizations have led to the realization that recruiting talent is one of the most pressing problems since proper recruitment and selection practices enhance organizational effectiveness. Anecdotal evidence suggest alarming rates of laxity, non-performance, absenteeism and corrupt practices as some of the job performance associated with county government employees. The purpose of the research was to investigate the influence Person-Organization fit considerations on recruitment and selection process on employee performance in Kenya. A descriptive design was employed with a survey method. The target population comprised all the county employees at the level of middle, senior and above in the 47 counties in Kenya, with estimated total employees of 58,617. Employees at the junior level whose engagement may not require rigorous recruitment and election process were omitted, with the assumption that the category of employees may not be familiar with the entire process. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the counties to be used in the study. Consequently, six counties were sampled for participation based on demographic and geographic characteristics of the county. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample individual study respondents, numbering 224 in total distributed accordingly among the counties of study. Data was collected using questionnaire and secondary source, eliciting information as per the study objectives as well as gathering information with respect to respondent demographic profile. Using Cronbach's alpha, an index of 0.76 for the questionnaire was established. With the help of SPSS computer program, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages) was performed. Inferential statistics consisting of ordered regression analysis and correlation coefficient analysis were used in the analysis. The study findings pointed that person organization fit have a direct significant influence on employee performance at 5% level. This study recommends that county governments intensify efforts of accurately estimating the person-organization fit of their prospective employees during recruitment and selection process since it influences employee performance.

Keywords: Recruitment, Person-organization Fit, Job Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Recruiting people with right skill set to the public service is essential to delivering high quality and responsive services [1]. Recruiting talent is one of their most pressing problems since proper recruitment and selection practices enhance organizational effectiveness. Bhardwaj and Punia [2] emphasize the importance of recruitment and selection; to an organization as it affects employee productivity, training needs and hence costs related to employee development, and staff turnover among organization members.

In light of the ongoing modernization in the public sector, more strategic importance have been placed on human resource practices affecting efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations[3]. County governments instituted as devolved units enabling responsive, prompt, effective, impartial and equitable

provision of services at close proximity the citizens. Since their setting up in accordance with constitution, consistent with greater exposure to scrutiny, they have attempted to alter the type of staff they employ, to perform optimally in line with expectations from the citizens [4].

At the county, the body vested with recruitment and selection duties is the County Public Service Boards (CPSBs). The constitution requires all CPSBs to ensure transparency and timely provision of accurate information regarding job openings to the public. It is supposed to provide fair competition and merit as the basis of appointments and promotions; representation of Kenya's diverse communities; affording adequate and equal opportunities for appointment at all levels of the public service, including men and women; the members of all ethnic groups; and

persons with disabilities. Appointments into the county public service board are in various categories namely, permanent and pensionable, medium term, thus one to five years renewable contract and short term [5]. Consequently, adhering to the constitutional ethos of openness and transparency in recruitment and selection practices by county governments is very crucial [6].

Moreover, the county governments public service, like the central government public service have also faced severe employee performance problems including patronage (Kragh, 2012) inefficiency, poor performance and a lack of delivery of basic services[7]. However, the mechanisms upon which the recruitment and selection processes can activate levers that individual employee performance has remained opaque [8, 9]. According to Akinboade, Kinfack and Mokwena [10] what is more in African countries' poor performance in service delivery is that it seems unresponsive to changes in institutional arrangements, as failure continues to thrive under both centralized and decentralized delivery mechanisms. Because of patronage problems in the public sector recruitment and selection, decentralization efforts have been favored as they are likely to improve innovation and accountability at lower levels of government [11].

Talents are scarce and their attraction becomes increasingly complex. Various factors have mandated reform of public sector recruitment and selection, including fiscal retrenchment, bloated and inefficient public sector [12]. Besides, there is need to focus on performance-oriented approaches to public service delivery [13]. Further, recruitment and selection into the public sector has raised a lot of concern due to a number of challenges including labor market dynamics, declining trust in government, declining commitment and sector switching among public service employees, and expressed preferences for private sector work among public affairs graduates, and decreased job security among public sector employees [14].

Public sector HRM is becoming more flexible and similar to the private sector in content and character in a bid to meet these challenges. Hence, with better talent acquisition, employee engagement improves and so does the productivity [15]. Maximizing team engagement, motivation, and retention through due diligence in talent acquisition is vital in today's highly competitive environment. Only a talent resourcing process, that is well defined and well executed from start to finish yields consistent, complete results as well as being of competitive advantage in the struggle for talent. Diogo [16], the strategic role of such a human resource paradigm is likely to help significantly in the achievement of national goals and objectives. Besides,

such a recruitment and selection approach rooted in professionalism and ethics allows an organization the opportunity to find the best candidate for an open position, but it also provides a potential candidate the opportunity to assess the organization for right-fit [17].

It is imperative for the county governments to be able to refine and implement comprehensive merit system as the basis for civil service professionalism [18]. Recruitment, selection, and advancement of county civil servants ought to be on merit after fair and open competition as well as be based on the competency framework. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the recruitment and selection process of county staff is also supposed to follow the constitutional quota system of one-third gender rule [19]. Therefore, for county governments to achieve their missions and make a positive impact on the citizens that they serve, it is imperative for them to become an employer of choice and to be regarded as a great place to work both for existing and potential employees. The present study will investigate the role played by person-organization fit during recruitment and selection processes of county governments in Kenya as an antecedent of employee job performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1: Sample size distribution

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

Using Cronbach's alpha, an index greater than 0.7 for the questionnaire items was established, implying that the reliability of the instrument was good. The following regression equation was used:

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

Where:

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

X_i are the independent variables (person-organization fit parameter estimate for each respondent)

β_0 is the regression constant

β_1 is the coefficient for person-organization fit
 u_i are an unobservable error terms; a random disturbance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Respondents

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

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3: Respondents' Age Brackets

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

Majority (44.4%) of the respondents were aged 35 - 44 years. About 32.9% of the total respondents were aged less than 35 years while 19.4% were aged 45-54 years. There were very few respondents aged 55 - 65 years (3.2%) as shown in Table 3. A cumulative percentage of 77.3% of the respondents were aged either less than 35 years or between 35-44 years.

The youth who fall in the age bracket of less than 35 years of age was reasonably low, an indication that the youth larger population was still left out in the employment opportunities in the County government and this explain the major unemployment rate in the government of Kenya. This implies that majority of the

county government employees are middle aged persons.

Age have an influence on employee ability to conduct the assigned tasks. According to Alonso and Lewis [24] assert age is highly correlated with both the employee grade and experience, though at declining rates. According to Mosca and Pastore [25], young and middle aged employees are more productive and generally receptive to new technology.

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

Most of the respondents had bachelor degree level of education as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents' Highest Level of Education

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

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

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

Table 5: Duration served in the county government

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

Most of the respondents had served in their current positions in the county government for 1 – 2 years as depicted in Table 5.

About 48.6% of the respondents had served their respective county governments in their current positions for between 1 – 2 years. About 37.5% had served for more than 2 years while 13.9% had served less than 1 (one) year. These results can be explained by the fact that the County Governments in Kenya have been in existence since the year 2013. In addition, the larger number of employees who have been in the County Government for the last two years may be the mass recruitment that was done at the initial stages of the implementation of devolution. Employees who have

served for a period of more than two years is understood to be those inherited from the former Local councils and others seconded from the national government.

Employee performance in county governments in Kenya

In determining the employee performance, twelve items were constructed to measure the county governments employee performance on a scale of 1 to 5 point in Likert-type survey instrument where strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1. The results were analyzed and summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Extent of employee performance

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
I get opportunity to be creative and innovative in my work	6.0%	8.3%	7.4%	32.9%	45.4%	100.0%	4.03	1.19
I am able to complete my job tasks accurately within time	2.8%	10.6%	7.9%	44.9%	33.8%	100.0%	3.96	1.05
Generally, I am rated high in service delivery in my county	2.8%	14.4%	19.4%	33.3%	30.1%	100.0%	3.74	1.12
My work targets are appraised within a given period.	4.6%	13.4%	9.7%	41.2%	31.0%	100.0%	3.81	1.15
I take on challenging work tasks, when available	1.4%	7.9%	7.9%	46.8%	36.1%	100.0%	4.08	0.94
I am motivated to meet and exceed my job expectations	0.9%	10.2%	10.2%	38.0%	40.7%	100.0%	4.07	1.00
I find myself representing the County favourably to outsiders.	2.3%	7.4%	15.7%	39.4%	35.2%	100.0%	3.98	1.01
I am motivated to be committed and loyal to the County Government	0.9%	7.4%	11.1%	36.1%	44.4%	100.0%	4.16	0.96
I would still choose to work for the County Government	2.8%	9.7%	14.4%	31.0%	42.1%	100.0%	4.00	1.10
The rate of absenteeism is low	2.3%	9.3%	13.4%	36.1%	38.9%	100.0%	4.00	1.05
The rate of lateness to work is low	2.8%	9.3%	13.9%	38.9%	35.2%	100.0%	3.94	1.06
The rate of turnover is low	8.3%	9.7%	14.4%	29.2%	38.4%	100.0%	3.80	1.28
Total	3.2%	9.8%	12.1%	37.3%	37.6%	100.0%	3.96	0.70

On average, the employee respondents' performance was highest with respect to their motivation to be committed and loyal to the County Government (with mean of 4.157 and standard deviation of 0.956). The same was with taking on challenging work tasks when available (mean of 4.083 with a standard deviation of 0.936); motivation to meet and exceed job expectations (mean of 4.074 with a standard deviation of 1.000); getting opportunity to be creative and innovative in work (mean of 4.032 with a standard deviation of 1.187). Lastly was continued choice of working for the County Government (mean of 4.000 with a standard deviation of 1.000), and low rates of absenteeism (mean of 4.000 with a standard deviation of 1.052). The mean employee performance from twelve items used in this study was computed as 3.964 with a standard deviation of .697.

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

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

Morgeson and colleagues [32], recommended that job autonomy is crucial in promoting job performance in organizations. When employees are granted adequate autonomy to perform their work, their output is normally higher. According to Coyle-Shapiro and colleagues, [33] better hiring policies offer the prospect of finding more suitable, more productive workers who with effective appraisal schemes can raise productivity and therefore superior employee performance. Similarly, feedback and performance-related pay can improve performance through better incentives. Parker and Turner [34] agreed that it is certainly the case that employee recruitment can be highly accurate in acting as predictors of future job performance, if they are properly managed and selected appropriately. Recruitment and selection process can be extremely useful in bolstering the employee performance.

Person-organization fit considerations on recruitment and selection process in county governments in Kenya

This study sought to determine to what extent employees agreed with a set of statement about their county at the time of employment regarding person-organization fit was made. Table 7 summarizes these results.

Table 7: Person-Organization Fit in County Governments in Kenya

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. dev.
My personal values match my County's values and culture	11 (5.1%)	9 (4.2%)	12 (5.6%)	96 (44.4%)	88 (40.7%)	216 (100%)	4.12	1.04
There is good fit between what my job offers and what I am looking for in a job	8 (3.7%)	12 (5.6%)	17 (7.9%)	105 (48.6%)	74 (34.3%)	216 (100%)	4.04	1.00
The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled well by my present job	6 (2.8%)	14 (6.5%)	26 (12%)	99 (45.8%)	71 (32.9%)	216 (100%)	4.00	1.10
My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job	5 (2.3%)	17 (7.9%)	16 (7.4%)	93 (43.1%)	85 (39.4%)	216 (100%)	4.10	1.00

Table 7 shows that majority of the employee respondents reported that their personal values matched with those of their county governments' value and culture. Most of the employees agreed to the statement as represented by 44.4% and was closely followed by respondents who strongly agreed (40.7%). A few respondents (5.6%) were however undecided with others disagreeing (4.2%) and strongly disagreeing (5.1%). On a scale of 1 – 5, an average employee scored 4.12 with a standard deviation of 1.04 implying a high person – organization fit.

It can be seen from Table 7 that most of the county government employees claimed that there was a good fit between what their job offered and what they were looking for in their present job. Specifically, 48.6% of the respondents agreed to the statement while an additional 34.3% strongly agreed. Some respondents were however undecided (7.9%) with others disagreeing (5.6%) and strongly disagreeing (3.7%). On a Likert scale of 1 – 5, an average employee in the sample scored 4.042 (with a standard deviation of 0.990) on person-organization fit with respect to what the job offers and what the employee was looking for.

Table 7 shows that majority of the employee respondents reported that the attributes that they look for in a job were fulfilled well by their present job. Most of the employees agreed to the statement as represented by 45.8% and was closely followed by

respondents who strongly agreed (32.9%). A few respondents were however undecided (12.0%) with others disagreeing (6.5%) and strongly disagreeing (2.8%). On a scale of 1 – 5, an average employee scored 3.995 with a standard deviation of 0.981 implying a high person – organization fit.

It is evident from Table 7 that most of the county government employees claimed that their abilities and training portrayed a good fit with their job requirements. Specifically, 43.1% of the respondents agreed to the statement while an additional 39.4% strongly agreed. Some respondents were however undecided (7.4%) with others disagreeing (7.9%) and strongly disagreeing (2.3%) on this issue. On a Likert scale of 1 – 5, an average employee in the sample scored 4.093 (with a standard deviation of 0.993) on person-organization fit with respect to a match between abilities and training with current job requirement.

Influence of person-organization fit considerations on recruitment and selection process on employee performance

This study sought to determine whether person organization fit (on recruitment and selection) had significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya. The use of Pearson's correlation coefficient and ordered logistic regression analysis was employed and the results summarized in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8: Influence of person organization fit on employee performance in county governments in Kenya

		Person-organization fit	Employee Performance
Person-organization fit	Pearson Correlation	1	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	216	216
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.497**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	216	216

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficients results for the influence of person organization fit on employee

performance in county governments in Kenya is shown in Table 8. The results reveals that there was a

significant influence of person organization fit on employee performance at 1% level (p-value = 0.000) as evident from a calculated Pearson’s correlation coefficient of +.497 at 214 degrees of freedom. This implies that person-organization fit has a significant and positive influence on employee performance where higher person-organization fit leads to greater employee performance.

To test the hypothesis, “person-organization fit has no significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya”, ordered logistic regression test was also used and the results summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Ordered Logistic Regression for the influence of person-organization fit on employee performance

Employee performance	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P> z
Person-organization fit	1.539	0.189	8.16	0.000

N = 216, Log Likelihood = -667.64, LR χ^2 (1) = 74.30, Prob> χ^2 =0.000, Pseudo R²=0.053

The coefficient for person-organization fit (1.539) was found to be positive and statistically significant at 5% (Table 9). The log likelihood for the fitted model of -667.64 and the likelihood ratio (LR) chi-squared value of 74.30 (Prob> χ^2 = 0.000) indicate that the two parameters are jointly significant at 5%. Pseudo R² of 0.053, however, does not meet the statistical threshold of 20% implying that other than person-organization fit; there are other factors influencing employee performance. It is only about 5.3% changes in the employee performance that could be attributed to the person-organization fit. Due to these results, the null hypothesis, “person-organization fit has no significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya” was therefore rejected, thus better person-organization fit leads to higher employee performance.

also with selecting and promoting people who ‘fit’ the culture and the strategic requirements of the organization.

In order to enhance the sustainability of the organization through better employee performance, HRM places more emphasis than traditional personnel management on finding people whose attitudes and behaviour are likely to be congruent with what management believes to be appropriate and conducive to success [38]. For employee performance to improve in an organization, HRM approach to resourcing should therefore emphasize the matching of human resources to organizational requirements. For this reason, organizations are concentrating more on ‘the attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of employees’ [39]. This tendency has however, its dangers.

Mirvis and Hall [35] point out that organizations are making continued employment explicitly contingent on the fit between people’s competences and business needs since person-organization fit has a significant influence on employee performance. For this reason, leaner organizations may make greater demands on employees and are less likely to tolerate people who no longer precisely fit their requirements.

According to Can and colleagues [40], the harmony between the employee and the job (person-organization fit) is very important for the employee and organization. Yelboğa [41] supported the same argument by stating that inappropriate recruitment and selection cause a general disharmony between the employee and organization interests, deformity and eventually high rate of staff circulation because of the job releases.

According to Armstrong [36] organizations are not static things, just as how employees are. Changes are constantly taking place in the business itself, in the environment in which the business operates, and in the people who work in the business. For this reason, organizations should cultivate to ensure better person-organization fit since it eventually impact on the employee performance. Organizations must ensure to align their environmental circumstances with those of its employees in order to achieve greater employee performance.

Hypothesis Testing

The following hypothesis was tested:

Ho There is no significant influence of person-organization fit considerations on recruitment and selection process on employee performance among the county governments in Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson correction coefficient and ordered logistic regression analysis. The correlation coefficients results for the influence of person organization fit on employee performance in county governments in Kenya revealed that there was a significant influence of person organization fit on employee performance at 5% level (r=.497, p-value = 0.000). Similarly, the ordered logistic regression for the coefficient for person-organization fit (1.539) was positive and statistically significant at 5%

(P-value = 0.000). Therefore the null hypothesis, “person-organization fit has no significant influence on employee performance in county governments in Kenya” was rejected, thus person-organization fit has a significant influence on employee performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Person-organization fit influences employee performance where higher person-organization fit leads to greater employee performance. Efforts by county governments to estimate the person-organization fit of their prospective employees is critical because it influence employee performance. Measures to align the person-organization fit of their current employees are also needed if higher employee performance is to be achieved.

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