

Perceived Working Conditions on Employee Performance in Zero Rated Hotels within Nakuru Town Kenya

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Abstract: In hospitality industry performance of employees is a major concern because of the desired goal through input relationship and social aspirations. The purpose of this the study was to examine the influence of perceived working conditions on employee performance in zero rated hotels within Nakuru Town, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the influence of working hours, on the relationship between working condition on employee performance. Literature review was done basing on the independent variable, the study adopted a descriptive research design with a target population of 1080. A suitable sample of 108 respondents was selected from the target population for data collection. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The validity and reliability of the instruments was done through consultation of experts and cronbach alpha coefficient calculated at 0.70 respectively. Using SPSS, descriptive statistics for mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics for Pearson product moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient and regression analysis were used for data analysis. Findings showed that it is evident that long working hours has a deleterious effect on employee performance in the hotel industry. It is the duty of hoteliers to strike the right balance of working hours their employees are subjected to since too much of it will lead to a decline of their productivity and too little of it will demotivate them.

Keywords: Working conditions, Employee Performance.

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Introduction

Hospitality sector (Chen, 2013) is an important segment of tourism industry in any economy. Employees play a crucial role of delivering services to customers and tourist at large in the hospitality sector. Tourism and hospitality industry is considered to be the largest and generator of employment to all generation of people worldwide (Hegarty and Przezborska (2005). The hospitality sector embraces a large number of workplaces including; Motels, campsites, Restaurants, Bar, Cafeteria, Catering and Canteen establishments, travel agencies and tourism information offices (ILO, 2001).

A recent global survey of employee's engagement found that fewer than 1 in 3 employee worldwide (31%) are engaged &nearly one in 5 (17%) are disengaged (Blessing white inc,

2011). Recent studies have estimated that the cost of disengagement in lost productivity for Australia is \$ 39 billion, for the USA \$350 Billion, and for German 133.6 Billion euros, (Coffman and Noy, 2012; HC online, 2011; Nink and Ott, 2011). Tourism is among the fast growing sectors and above all a top foreign earner to Kenyan economy (Kenyan Vision 2030). In the year 2011 the Hospitality and restaurant enterprise recorded a growth of 5.0% compared to 4.2% in the year 2010 with tourism earnings increasing by Kshs. 24.2 billion to Kshs. 97.9 billion (Ministry of state for Planning, Development and Vision 2030).

The sector has made major contributions toward the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), over the recent past. Further it is likely to grow more in coming years thus improving the economic development of the country, (Kenya Vision 2030). The hospitality sector is known to be highly labour intensive Kristenen *et al.*, (2002), which means irregular working hours, unexpected interactions with guests, balancing family and life issues, low wages and income, repetitive work, long working hours, weekend and nightshift, problems with coordination of work, difficult and stressful working condition, working under pressure to meet deadlines, less promotion opportunities, deliberately changing the duty rosters to inconvenience a particular employee. The hospitality sector is known to be highly labour intensive Kristenen *et al.*, (2002), which means irregular working hours, unexpected interactions with guests, balancing family and life issues, low wages and income, repetitive work, long working hours, weekend and nightshift, problems with coordination of work, difficult and stressful working condition, working under pressure to meet deadlines, less promotion opportunities, deliberately changing the duty rosters to inconvenience a particular employee.

Working Conditions

According to business dictionary, 'Working conditions refers to the working environment and all existing circumstances affecting labor in the workplace', including working hours, rest periods, work schedules, to remuneration as well as physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the work place. Working conditions are created says Gerber *et al.*, (1998) states that the by the interactions of the employees with their organizational climate, including psychological as well as the physical working conditions. Bridger and Brusher (2011) argue, when people are distracted by noise that is unexpected, such as telephone rings, crowding or conversations, they are disturbed. MacMillan (2012) asserts that absence of lighting or even proper ventilation in any place of work would causes strain. Studies by Kumar and Shekhar (2012) and Elegido (2013) says that employees should be given the freedom to do what they love most, work with friendly colleagues, and believe in their employers' vision and mission, so that they can stay longer with the employers.

The conditions under which a job is performed can be different-from those completely comfortable to those very difficult and dangerous to employees' life and health. Difficult working conditions can be influenced by: External factors: climate-meteorological conditions, temperature, humidity, lighting in the workplace, noise and interference, gases, radiation, dust, smoke and other harmful factors; Subjective factors that include gender and age of the worker, fatigue, monotony, unfavorable posture during work, etc. Factors related to the organization of production such as duration of the work shift, work schedule, working time, work pace, excessive strain etc. For employee to be productive they need social support, good working conditions, good environment, interpersonal relation with management and peers, human resource policies (Chiang and Birtch, 2010).

Work within the hospitality industry and for that matter hotel, is highly labour intensive and has increasingly harsh environmental demands imposed upon it. Therefore before employees are allocated different chores it is proper to see if they meet the qualification. There are some jobs which have different groups who can perform. Example lifting heavy machine and equipment should be given to those who have muscles and stamina. Simple jobs which don't require much lifting to mothers and elderly people. According to Kristensen *et al.*, (2000) the nature of work within hotels include; hard deadlines, unexpected interactions with guests, long working hours, night and evening work, repetitive work, high emotional demands, low influence (control), shift work, high work space and problems with coordination of work.

Cottin and Lucifura (2013) carried a study on the pattern of workplace mental health in 15 countries in Europe to establish effect of mental health and conditions of work. They discovered that adverse working conditions have contributed to mental problems to employees. They also concluded that by improving working conditions through flexible work schedules can solve the problem.

A study done by Tourism Concern Foundation (TCF) 2013, on the impact of working conditions in all inclusive hotels in Kenya, Barbados and Tenerife. The results revealed that the staff had to cope with low wages, unfavorable working conditions, working under pressure and working for long hours. Amongst the respondents, employee were offered short term contract, hence did not receive benefits. They had no job security and had prolonged contact hours with the guest.

Method

Research design is the actual structure or arrangement or plan that indicates how participants were chosen and the time frame, in which data was collected, analyzed and interpreted (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2012). The study adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive design is concerned with finding out who, what, when, or how much? Descriptive research design allows detailed description and analysis of the variables under study, describing and presenting their characteristics without manipulation as supported by Saunders *et al.*, (2009). The target population for the study was 1080 staff of non-rated hotels within Nakuru town; drawn from the departments of Kitchen, Housekeeping, Restaurant, Housekeeping and Laundry. A sample size according to (Cooper and Schindler, 2006), refers to a group of participants or events consisting a portion of a target population which is carefully selected to represent a population. The sample representative of the non-rated hotels in this study is 150.

Discussion

Descriptive Statistics for Working Hours in Zero Rated Hotels

The study wanted to find out the influence of working hours on organisational performance. Below were their responses.

Table 1. Working Hours Descriptive Statistics

Statement	%						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	S/D
Long working hours affect my performance	4.5	17.3	1.8	17.3	59.1	4.09	1.3
I have time to rest during working hours	20.9	39.1	4.4	26.4	9.1	2.64	1.3

I do more than assigned duties	5.5	18.2	7.3	33.6	35.5	3.75	1.2
I get time to socialize after work	17.3	36.4	5.5	27.3	13.6	2.84	1.3
Am not comfortable working night shift	20	15.5	4.6	15.5	44.6	3.49	1.6
Pay should be equal to work load	1.8	3.7	6.4	24.8	63.3	4.45	0.9
I have fatigue from work always	12.8	29.4	9.2	27.5	21.1	3.18	1.4

Key: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; N-Not sure, D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree; %-Percentage

The study sought to determine the relationship between working hours and employee performance. As indicated in the table below As indicated in the table above 59.09% of the respondents strongly agreed that long working hours affect their performance, 17.27% also agreed with the statement while 17.27% of the respondents disagreed that long working hours does not affect their performance 4.55% strongly disagreed that long hours doesn't affect their performance then lastly 1.82% were not sure if long hours affect their performance. I have time to rest during my working hours at 39.09% of respondents disagreed and 20.91 strongly agreed that they rest during working hours.

Other respondents of 26.36% agreed that they rest during working hours while 9.09 % also strongly agreed of having rest period, 4.55% were not sure if they had resting periods. From the above statement 35.45% of respondents strongly agreed of doing more than assigned duties and 33.64 % also agreed of doing more than assigned duties. Other section of respondents 18.18% disagreed while 5.45% strongly disagreed of doing more than assigned duties, then lastly 7.27% were not even sure if they were doing more than assigned duties.

From the finding 27.27% of respondents disagreed of having time to socialize after work and 17.27% also strongly disagreed of having time to socialize after work. Another 27.27% agreed of having time to socialize after work followed by 13.64 % who strongly agreed of having time to socialize after work, then a section of 5.45% were not sure if they ever socialized after work. Am not comfortable working night shift 44.45% strongly agreed of not working night shift, while 15.45% agreed that they are also not comfortable of working night shift. A section of respondents 20% strongly disagreed of having of being comfortable to work in night shift while 15.45% disagreed of being comfortable in working night shift. But 4.55% were not sure if they were comfortable or not. Considering the long working and hours and work load I believe the pay should be higher 63.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 24.77%agreed that the pay should be higher. While 3.67% of respondents disagreed with the statement and 1.83% also strongly disagreed. Having fatigue from work always 29.36% disagreed with the statement while 12.84% strongly disagreed. A section of 9.17% were not sure if they were fatigued always from work while 27.52% agree of being fatigued always from work and 21.1 % respondents also strongly agreed of being fatigued from work always.

These findings also reinforce that longer working hours have an adverse effect on worker health, owing to fatigue and work stress (Sparks *et al.*, 2001; van der Hulst 2003; Caruso *et al.*, 2004; Golden *et al.*, 2011), which tend to reduce the potential power of productivity. A study conducted by Moy (2006) on clerks and professional workers' association found out that 65.5% of workers believed that a five day work week would help them better manage their private matters. To spend time with their families, friends and relatives and also create time for leisure and recreation thus will help them be productive at work (Ur Rehman *et al.*, 2012).

Inferential Statistics

Test of Hypotheses

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.710a	0.609	0.595	0.37246
a Predictors: (Constant), workplace condition,			

Source: Field Data, 2018

H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between working hours and employee performance in zero rated hotels within Nakuru Town

From Table 4.13, working hours ($r=0.710$; $p<0.01$) was found to have a positive effect on Employee performance. Statistically, this null hypothesis was rejected because $p<0.05$. Thus, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis and it concluded that working hours had a positive significant effect on employee performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study findings, it was conclude that working hours ($r=0.645$; $p<0.001$), had a significant positive influence on employee performance. It is evident that long working hours has a deleterious effect on employee performance in the hotel industry. It is the duty of hoteliers to strike the right balance of working hours their employees are subjected to since too much of it will lead to a decline of their productivity and too little of it will demotivate them. The study recommended that the policy makers should develop a functional policy on working hours since longer the working hours it affects employee performance. The study recommends that crucial for the hotels management to designate the right amount of work to the employees so as to increase their productivity levels. Also, it is important for the employees to have time to rest and socialize with their colleagues after work. Besides, the working hours and work load should be commensurate with the pay received by the employees.

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