



## **INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF NON-TEACHING STAFF IN SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA**

<sup>1\*</sup> **Lydia Ntabo Sereti**  
lydiahtsereti1@gmail.com

<sup>2\*\*</sup> **Sussy Wekesa**  
swekesa@jkuat.ac.ke

<sup>1,2</sup> *Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya*

**Abstract:** *Public universities are an important component in the economies of their countries since they produce the necessary human resource required to run the economies. They also lead in research which allows for a broader educational experience for students to explore and apply new thoughts through study and testing. However, statistics indicate that most public universities in Kenya offer poor services, an indication that the employees in these universities are not satisfied by their jobs. This study sought to analyze the influence of work environment and employee job satisfaction among non-teaching staff in public universities with a specific objective to investigate the influence of employee relationships and employee job satisfaction among non-teaching staff in selected public universities in Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive research design, which describes the state of affairs as it exists in the present. The target population in this study was the 547 employees of Kisii University, the 472 employees of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and the 412 employees of Rongo University. The questionnaires were used for the collection of data from the respondents. The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of physical workplace environment and employee job satisfaction. Results revealed that the association between employee relationship and employee job satisfaction is positive and significant ( $r = 0.585$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ). This implied that for every unit increase in employee job satisfaction, there is a positive increase of 0.585 in employee satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** *employee job satisfaction, public universities, work environment*

### **1. Introduction**

One of the most important goals in organizations is to exhaust the opportunities of getting the optimum employee performance through a satisfied work force in order to achieve organizational objectives (Butler & Rose, 2011). Employees working environment is one of the major factors which may influence the level of job satisfaction. According to Chandrasekar (2011), employees' job satisfaction could be determined by the environment in which they work.

According to Tripathi (2014), the work environment can be defined as the environment in which people work that include physical setting, job profile, culture and market condition. The work environment can be described as the environment in which people are working it is wide and incorporates the physical scenery examples noise, equipment, heat, fundamentals of the job itself workload, task, complexity. Extensive business features include: culture, history. On extra business background it involves industry setting, workers relation. However,

all the aspects of work environment are correspondingly significant or indeed appropriate when considered job satisfaction and also affects the welfare of employees (Jain & Kaur, 2014).

Job satisfaction is generally recognized as a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of both intrinsic that is the job itself and opportunities for personal growth and accomplishment and extrinsic, which includes pay and benefits, company policies, supervision and support, co-workers, job security, chances for promotion (Misener *et al.*, 2016). Human resource management is still not what it should be, and the human aspects relating to employee job satisfaction and quality of work life, which affects productivity, are neglected (Horwitz, Kamoche and Chew, 2012). According to Farh (2012) employees will always be contended when they feel that their immediate environment states are in tandem with their obligations. Chandrasekar (2011) asserts that the type of workplace environment in which employees operate determines whether organizations will prosper.

Karugu (2016) observes that most Kenyan organizations have a unique organizational culture that aims at maximizing employee job satisfaction. However, there are statistics that indicate that most of the Kenyan firms currently experiences high employee turnover rates, especially with the junior members of staff. This is an indication that most of the organizations have high rates of employee job dissatisfaction.

According to Odhiambo and Waiganjo (2014) and Kipkebut (2010), the effect of non-teaching personnel, dubbed "invisible workers," has been ignored in scholarly contributions. Their work is mostly administrative, and it entails assisting teaching staff with their duties, dealing with student non-academic issues, and working in administrative functions such as finance, human resources, marketing, the university corporate department, and many other sections.

According to Ndayisaba (2017), he investigated the amount to which employees see their employment environment as meeting their intrinsic, extrinsic, and social requirements, as well as their desire to remain in the firm. The study also examined the impact of workplace environment perception on employee commitment and turnover in the organization, and he concluded that if employees are provided with enabling workplace environmental support, they will be highly satisfied and show a high level of commitment to their organization, resulting in a low turnover rate.

## **2. Employee Relationships and Employees Job Satisfaction**

Sy, Tram, & O'Hara (2001) conducted a study of employee and manager emotional intelligence to job satisfaction and performance. The study shows how relationships that exist between employees tend to impact on job satisfaction and performance. Employees of nine locations of a single restaurant franchise were the target population in the study. The sample size used was 187. A questionnaire was the data collection tool used. The findings obtained from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between employee relations and job satisfaction. The study failed to show the manner in which relations between employees and individuals in management positions impact on job satisfaction.

The relationship between employees is built on the pillars of their communication. Positive and effective communications results to strengthened bonds between the workers, greater teamwork and hence higher performance and satisfaction derived from the jobs (Proctor, 2014). Poor relationships between the employees results to a communication breakdown. Employees spent most of their time at their work place, and thus the relationship they have with their colleagues positively or negatively impact on their individual lives and even that of the organization. Friendship at workplace facilitates better communication, guards respect amongst the

workers and builds trust among them (Lee & Ok, 2010). Such positive values improve the employees' job outcomes, and contribute greatly to their job satisfaction.

Proctor (2014) in a study on effective organizational communication affects employee attitude, happiness and job satisfaction. Sought to assess the extent to which employee relationships impacted on employee attitude, happiness, as well as job satisfaction. Employees at Southern Utah University were the target population in this study. A sample size of 51 employees and supervisors drawn from the University was used. However, only 20 of the sampled persons agreed to participate in the study. A survey was conducted for the purposes of gathering data from the 20 respondents. The study found that employee relations impacted on employee attitude, happiness, as well as job satisfaction. Positive employee relationships were found to have a positive impact of job satisfaction among employees at Southern Utah University. The sample size used in the study was very small. The sample may not be a true representation of the entire employee population at South Utah University.

Employees with good relationships share knowledge in their jobs, which leads to better performance, growth of the individuals and the organization as well (Kuzu & Ozilhan, 2014). Healthy work place relationships must not just be horizontal, but also vertical. Employer- employee relationship must be good to see better production, and achievement of personal and organizational goals. Employees in good terms with their seniors feel appreciated and valued, and hence become more effective in execution of their tasks, and achieve job satisfaction much faster, overly promoting the growth of the business.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

A number of studies have shown that work environment influences job satisfaction differently. According to study by Joshua (2011), on environmental factors affecting employee performance in Middle East business performance show that failure to understand the work environment can generate to poor performance due to constraints to the staff. Another study by Kairu (2013) on challenges facing employee job satisfaction in Ethiopia public institutions showed that management efforts to control environmental impacts to employees enhances satisfaction which translates to improved work performance within the public institutions. Gitahi (2014) who investigated the effect of workplace environment on performance of commercial banks employees in Nakuru Town showed that psychosocial aspects are an important factor in boosting the employee job satisfaction than the physical workplace factors and work life factors. None of these studies however focused on non-teaching staff in public universities in Kenya.

This review shows that while there are several studies that have been conducted on work environment, specific studies on the influence of work environment on the influence of work environment on employee job satisfaction in public universities in western Kenya are scanty. This is the gap that the present study sought to fill.

### **4. Scope of the Study**

The study was carried out in Kenya at selected public universities. The selected public universities are Kisii University, Rongo University and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST). In terms of subject, the study confined itself to investigating the effect of workplace environment on employee satisfaction with a particular emphasis on Kisii University. These specific objectives are drawn from the larger area of employee motivation. The study was conducted between the months of June and July 2022.

## 5. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design which describes the state of affairs as it exists in the present (Kothari, 2010). This design was appropriate for collecting information as it would help assess the impact that the independent variables which include physical environment, employee relations, management practices, as well as work-life balance had on job satisfaction, the dependent variable from people. It provided valuable information to certain research questions in its own right. It is therefore justified that descriptive design is most suited and justifiably adopted in this study because the method is useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. The target population in this study was 547 non-teaching staff of Kisii University, the 472 non-teaching staff of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and the 412 non-teaching staff of Rongo University. The study used stratified random sampling design to select the respondents for the study for each university.

Before this, the sample size was determined by using the Watson (2017) since it took into account the precision of the results, confidence level, degree of variability, as well as the response rate in determining the sample used for the calculation. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{\left[ \frac{p[1-p]}{\frac{A^2}{Z^2} + \frac{p[1-p]}{N}} \right]}{R} \quad (1)$$

Where, n = sample size required

N = number of people in the population

P = estimated variance in population, as a decimal 0.5 for 50-50

A = Precision desired, expressed as a decimal of, 0.05 for 5%

Z = Based on confidence level 1.96 for 95% confidence

R = Estimated Response rate, as decimal 0.98

Then, the sample size is:

$$n = \frac{\left[ \frac{0.5[1-0.5]}{\frac{(0.05)^2}{(1.96)^2} + \frac{0.5[1-0.5]}{1431}} \right]}{0.98} = \frac{302.663}{0.98} = 308 \text{ respondents} \quad (2)$$

The proportion of each category in the population to the sample was calculated using the following formula;

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} \times n \quad (3)$$

Where,  $n_i$  = Sample size of each category

$N_i$  = Total population in each category

N = Total population

n = Sample size

In this study primary data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire is considered appropriate tool since it allowed quick and efficient data collection. It also allowed descriptive, correlation and inferential statistical analysis of the data to be collected.

## 6. Descriptive Results

The research instrument was divided into two sub-sections for each of the research variable. The two sub-sections consisted of closed ended questions. These questions provided respondents with statements opinion to select from Likert scale. The results for the analyses are explained in the sub-sections below;

The respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement with specific statements drawn from measures of this employee relationships and employees job satisfaction which were measured on a five-points Likert's scale where 1 was Strongly Disagree, 2 was Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Descriptive statistics for the analysis are shown in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Descriptive Results of Employee Relationships and Employees Job Satisfaction*

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel like a part of a team working towards a shared goal	20.4%	14.0%	5.4%	39.4%	20.8%	3.26	1.45
Management regularly provides feedback	20.4%	13.1%	5.0%	41.2%	20.4%	3.28	1.45
I have good work relationship with the people around me is motivating.	21.3%	14.5%	3.6%	38.5%	22.2%	3.25	1.48
The management provides supportive supervision to individuals while maintaining a harmonious working relationship	21.3%	14.9%	3.6%	40.7%	19.5%	3.22	1.46
The management have good conflict management mechanism.	21.7%	16.7%	4.1%	42.1%	15.4%	3.12	1.43
Management has a clear disciplinary procedure which is fair.	21.3%	16.3%	4.5%	37.6%	20.4%	3.19	1.47

For the employee relationships and employees job satisfaction, six statements were also used as a measure of the variable. As it can be observed from Table 1, of the six statements, the respondents generally neither agreed nor disagreed on whether employee relationships influence employees' job satisfaction. This is shown by the weighted average means of between 3.12 and 3.28 which are all close to 3. However, out of the six statements, the respondents rated the statement that Management regularly provides feedback had highest weighted average

mean of 3.28 while the statement that the management have good conflict management mechanism received the lowest rating with a weighted mean of 3.12. This indicates that the respondents were undecided on whether employee relationships influence employees' job satisfaction.

The results are in concurrent with Proctor (2014), who focused on efficient organizational communication influences employee attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction. The goal was to determine the extent to which employee relationships influenced employee attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction. This study's target population was Southern Utah University employees. A sample size of 51 University employees and managers was used. Unfortunately, only 20 of those polled volunteered to take part in the study. A survey was administered to the 20 responders in order to collect data. The study discovered that employee relations influenced employee attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction. Good employee interactions were discovered to have a beneficial impact on job satisfaction among Southern Utah University employees.

The study findings were in line with studies done by Sy, Tram, and O'Hara (201) who investigated the relationship between employee and manager emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and performance. The study demonstrates how employee interactions influence job satisfaction and performance. The study's target group was employees from nine different sites of a single restaurant franchise. The sample size was 187 people. A questionnaire was utilized to collect data. The study's findings revealed that there was a substantial association between employee relations and work satisfaction.

### **Descriptive Results of Employee Job Satisfaction**

The dependent variable of the study was employee job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics for the analysis are shown in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: Descriptive Results of Employee Job Satisfaction*

**Key:** SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Employees are comfortable with my work responsibilities.	20.4%	19.0%	3.2%	22.6%	34.8%	3.32	1.59
Feel comfortable in carrying out my responsibilities	20.4%	14.0%	0.9%	33.9%	30.8%	3.40	1.53
Frequently I do take on additional task on my own initiative	20.8%	12.2%	0.9%	35.3%	30.8%	3.42	1.53
If given a job by a different organization, I will reluctantly take it.	20.8%	12.7%	1.4%	43.4%	21.7%	3.32	1.47

The dependent variable was also measured by four statements. Out of the four statements that were used to measure it, the respondents generally neither agreed nor agreed on whether employee job satisfaction was effective or not.

### Correlational Results of Study Variables

In the present study, correlation was used to explore the relationship among a group of variables as suggested by Pallant (2010). A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates that two variables are perfectly related in a positive linear sense; a correlation coefficient of -1 indicates that two variables are perfectly related in a negative linear sense, and a correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two variables. A correlation coefficient of between 0.0 and 0.19 is considered to be “very weak”, between 0.20 and 0.39 is considered to be “weak”, between 0.40 and 0.59 is considered to be “moderate”, between 0.60 and 0.79 is considered to be “strong” and between 0.80 and 1.0 is considered to be “very strong” Pallant (2010). The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3: Correlation among Study Variables*

Variables		$X_I$	$Y$
$X_I$	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)		
$Y$	Pearson Correlation	.585**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Correlation analysis shows the direction, strength and significance of the relationships among the variables of study (Sekaran, 2000). The correlation analysis shows the direction, strength, and significance of the relationships among the variables of the study. A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other variables will also increase. On the other hand, a negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases the other variable decreases (Sekaran, 2003). As it can be inferred from Table 3 above, there is a high correlation between the study independent variables ( $X_I$ ) and the dependent variable ( $Y$ ).

Specifically, the association between employee relationship and employee job satisfaction is positive and significant ( $r = 0.585$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ). This implies that for every unit increase in employee relationship, there is a positive increase of 0.585 in employee job satisfaction.

## 7. Regression Coefficients

Table 4 presents the regression coefficient values (beta values) for each of the elements of work environment.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
(Constant)	1.775	.860		2.064	.000
$X_1$	.302	.077	.302	0.020	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

From Table 4 above, several inferences can be derived. The constant term in the regression equation of 1.775 indicates the level of employee job satisfaction that is present in the work place environment. After the analysis, and based on the results from the analysis, the following model was fitted in the study  $Y = 1.775 + 0.302X_1$ .

The objective was to determine the influence of employee relationship on employee job satisfaction. Table 4 shows that employee relationship ( $X_1$ ) has a positive statistically significant effect ( $\beta = 0.302$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) on employee job satisfaction. This implies that holding all factors constant, a unit increase in employee relationship leads to a 30.2% significant increase in employee job satisfaction.

## 8. Summary

The study concluded that the association between employee relationship and employee job satisfaction is positive and significant ( $r = 0.585$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ). This implied that for every unit increase in employee job satisfaction, there is a positive increase of 0.585 in employee satisfaction.

## REFERENCES

- Aisha, A. N., Hardjomidjojo, P., &Yassierli. (2013). *Effects of Working Ability, Working Condition, Motivation and Incentive on Employees Multi-Dimensional Performance*. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, 4(6).
- Ajala, E.M, (2017), *The Influence of Workplace environment on Workers' Welfare, Performance and Productivity among universities in Kenya*, *The African Symposium: Journal of the African Educational Research Network* 12 (1)141-149.
- Amusa, O.I., Iyoro, A.O., &Olabisi, A.F., (2013), *Work Environment and Job Performance of Librarians in the Public Universities in South-West Nigeria*. *Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(11), 457-461
- Ali, A. and Haider, J. (2012).*Impact of Internal Organizational Communications on Employee Job Satisfaction-case of some Pakistani banks*, *Global Advanced Research Journal of Management and Business Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 38-44.
- Al-Anzi, N. M. (2009). *Workplace Environment*. Retrieved 10/08/2015 [www.masterstudies.net/](http://www.masterstudies.net/)



- Armstrong, M. (2006). *Strategic Human Resource Management: A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, 10th ed. London: Kogan Page.
- Indrianawati, U. (2010). *The effect of leadership on performance management, good governance, internal and external satisfaction in study programs*. *China-USA Business Review*, 9(5), 8-28.
- Chandrasekar, K. (2011). *Workplace environment and its impact on organizational performance in Public Sector Organizations*, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, India.
- Chevalier, M. (2004). *High performance standards with a congenial working Environment*. Laura Miller, Washington DC.
- Clark, S.C. (2000). *Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance*. *Human Relations*, Vol. 53 No. 6, pp. 747-770.
- Duckett .H. & Macfarlane, E (2003). *Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership in Retailing, Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol .24, pp. 309-317.
- Elias. R. Z. (2006). *The Impact of Professional Commitment and Anticipatory socialization on Accounting Students' Ethical Orientation*, *Journal of Business ethics*, pp. 83-90
- Hannan, M. & Freeman, J. (2001), *Structural Inertia and Organizational Change*. *American journal of sociology*, 106(4), 960-1012.
- Howell, J.M. & Avolio, B.J. (2008). *Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(6), 891-902.
- Luthans, K. (2000); *Recognition: A Powerful, but often Overlooked, Leadership Tool to Improve Employee Performance*. *The Journal of Leadership Studies*, Vol.1, No.2,
- McCoy, J. M., & Evans, G. W. (2005). *Physical work environment*. In: J. Barling,
- Mugenda, M. and Mugenda, G. (2003), *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, Nairobi, Acts Press.
- Mullins, L. J. (2006). *Essentials of Organizational Behaviour*, Prentice Hall, pp. 183-190.
- Nel, P.S., Gerber, P.D., van, Schultz, H.B., Sono, T., & Werner, A. (2001). *Human Resource Management*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press
- N.M. & Sadegi, M., (2013); *Factors of Workplace Environment that Affect Employees Performance: A Case Study of Miyazu Malaysia*, *International Journal of Independent Research and Studies –Vol. 2, No.2* (pp. 66-78)
- Kiplagat, H.K., Momanyi M. and Kangethe N.S. (2019). *Dimensions of Kenyan university Staff's job satisfaction in view of various managerial leadership practices*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(3).
- Kirimi, B. A. & Minja, D. (2011), *Transformational Corporate Leadership*. Nairobi: Wake.
- Kothari, C. (2004). *Research Methodology* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: New Age International.

- Mugenda, O. M. & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Oso, W., & Onen, D., (2008). *A General Guide to Writing Research Proposal and Report*; (2nd ed). Kampala: Makerere University Printery.
- Peterson, R. S., Smith, D. B., Martorana, P. V., & Owens, P. D. (2003). *The impact of chief executive officer personality on top management team dynamics: One mechanism by which leadership affects organizational performance*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 795–808.
- Schwarzwald, J., Koslowsky, M., & Agassi, V. (2001). *Captain's leadership type and police officers' compliance to power bases*. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10 (3), 273.
- Sekaran, U. (2006). *Research Methods for Business: a skill building approach*. (4 th ed.). London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Singer, M., & Singer, A. (2001). *Situational constraints on transformational versus transactional leadership behavior, subordinates' leadership preference, and satisfaction*. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 130(3), 385-396.
- Swamy, G. (1994). *Kenya: Structural Adjustment in the 1980s*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 1238. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- Tella, A., Ayemi, Ayeni, C. O., & Popoola, S. O. (2007). *Work motivation, Job Satisfaction and Organization Commitment of Library Personnel in Academic and Research Libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria*. *Library Philosophy and Practice e-Journal*, Vol.4 (16).
- Tetty, W. J. (2006). *Staff retention in African universities: Elements of sustainable strategy*. Commissioned by the World Bank: Washington DC.
- Tripathi, A. (2014). *Workplace Environment: Consequences on Employees*. Retrieved 05/12/2019 <http://www.linkedin.com/pulse>
- Tzafir, S.S. (2005). *The relationship between trust, HRM practices and firm performance*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. 16(9): 1600-22.
- Richard Pech, Bret Slade, (2006). *"Employee Disengagement: is there Evidence of a Growing Problem?" Handbook of Business Strategy*, Vol-7(1), 21 – 25
- Vischer, J.C. (2008). *Towards an Environmental Psychology of Workplace: How People are Affected by Environments for Work*. *Journal of Architectural Science Review*, 56 (2), 97- 105.
- Williams, C., Solomon, G. & Pepper, R. *What is the Impact of Mobile Telephony on Economic Growth?*