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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive and explanatory survey design. This study targeted 359 heads of sections, 25 ward administrators and 8 members of the public service board. To ensure equal representation of individuals in the study stratified Random Sampling that involves dividing the population into two subgroups and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup was used. To this regard, the study used a sample size of 183 heads of sections and 13 ward administrators. Further, purposive sampling was used to select the eight members of the public service board as key informants for the study, since they were expected to provide in-depth information relevant to the study. After data collection, the filled-in and returned questionnaires were edited for completeness, coded and entries made into SPSS. The descriptive analysis involving frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviations were used as measures of central tendencies and dispersion respectively. A simple regression was also used to test the combined effect of all independent variables. The findings were presented in forms of Tables and charts. The study found out that there was positive and significant relationship between employee participation and performance of public servants ($\beta=0.431$, $p=0.000$). The study concluded that employee participation has a positive and significant effect on performance of public servants. The study concluded that the county government has used employee participation

to a small extent. By allowing employee participation through the trade union, the management of the County may make popular decisions with regard to promotions and internal appointment of employees, among others. The study recommended that for purposes of ensuring that employee participation influence performance of public servants to a large extent, team based participation should be embraced in order to provide employee voice alongside the trade unions.

Keywords: *Employee Participation, Performance of Public Servants and Vihiga County, Kenya.*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Human resource remains the key ingredient for organizational success, regardless of the particular resource emphasis in an industry. It is people who design, operate and repair the technology, people control the financial resources, and people manage other people in all organizations. Compared with technological or financial resources, human resources are the most unpredictable (because of the complexities embedded in their characteristics) and often the largest ongoing cost factor in any organization, and they may be regarded as its most valuable assets. It is therefore crucial that they are managed effectively, equitably and ethically, and that their personal and work needs are satisfied, if organizational objectives are to be achieved (Nankervis, Compton, Baird, and Coffey, 2011).

Although different organizations do have different HR strategies, two basic types of HR strategies can be identified: general strategies and specific strategies relating to the different aspects of human resource management such as learning and development (Adongo, 2013; Sila, 2014), employee participation (Arasa, Aosa, and Machuki, 2011). Employee participation has been discovered by HR scholars to result into organizational commitment, hence retention and improved employee productivity. Direct participation schemes in the organization, which include empowerment of individuals through attitude surveys, suggestion schemes and use of various work teams on one hand. Individuals as well as group negotiation teams (like through trade unions) on the other hand, have been found to positively relate with employee motivation (and consequently) performance (Kubaison, Gachunga, & Odhiambo, 2014; Arasa, Aosa, & Machuki, 2011).

Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn, and Rojniruntikul (2014) found that HR practices like worker participation in making decisions about his or her work have direct relationship with employee retention and engagement, and consequently firm performance in Thailand FDI's key industrial zone in Rayong province. Asamu, and Arisukwu, (2015) also established that there is a relationship between management style and worker productivity on one hand, and incentives and worker productivity on the other hand, among workers in Nigeria Machine Tools firms from two states; examining workplace mindfulness and its relations to job performance.

The Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA, 2014) assessed all the 47 Counties to establish whether target goals are being met in regard to budgets for which allocation of funds were made. Sectors upon which the County Governments were assessed included education sector, infrastructure, health, water, environment, tourism, agriculture, industrialization, transport, and trade. Performance of Vihiga County was found to be better than most other counties in all the sectors, although, just like other counties, most development projects remain incomplete. Thus, there is likelihood that HR practices in Vihiga County are aligned to its business strategies, as espoused by Armstrong (2010): business objectives are accomplished when human resource practices, procedures and systems are developed and implemented based on organizational needs,

that is, when a strategic perspective to human resource management is adopted. However, no study has been done to establish the influence of employee participation on Vihiga County Government, which might have contributed to better performance as compared to other county governments in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is universally accepted that devolution brings allocation and management of resources close to the people who in turn are able to implement development projects which suits their unique needs. Despite of this noble intent, county governments, having inherited employees from local authorities and other departments in the civil service, find themselves incapable of achieving set goals and targets through such employees who are unable to adapt to the changed system and work procedure. This situation calls for an analysis of strategic human resource management practices which are put in place by these county governments to achieve organizational goals meant to enhance service delivery in the new administrative units, since scholars are yet to draw any clear link between strategic HR practices and performance in situations where administrative authority in public sector is devolved. Approximately 40 out of 47 counties in Kenya have failed to complete their planned projects, and around 38 to 40 out of the 47 counties spent less than 40% of funds allocated to them in 2013 /2014 financial year, for various development projects budgeted for (CRA, 2014). Human resource management theorists (Armstrong, 2010; Gavrea, *et al.*, 2011; Sani, 2012; Waiganjo & Awino, 2012; and Dermol & Rakowska 2014) have largely linked organizational performance to strategic human resource management practices, this link is yet to be established in the new devolved systems owing to labour law requirements regulating downsizing, recruitment and selection, amongst others. Despite of this reality, county governments' are still expected to develop strategic HR practices capable of attaining better performance to satisfy the needs of the local population. Although several studies have linked employee participation with employee performance, there has been no study to establish this relationship in any county governments in Kenya. This study was therefore set to determine the influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review: Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to perceptions of fairness within an organizational setting (Greenberg, 1990), it has become a focus of justice researchers. Organizational justice has been widely accepted that it contributes to employee performance. Adams' equity theory indicates that an individual can alter his quality and quantity of work to restore justice when he perceives the outcome/input ratio to be unjust (Adams, 1966). Interestingly, some empirical studies have found that individuals decrease their performance to reduce input when they are underpaid, and increase their

performance to produce more input when they are overpaid (Greenberg, 1982). The equity theory has provided a theoretical explanation to the distributive justice's effect on performance.

Prior research has demonstrated that organizational justice has three distinct dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. First, distributive justice refers to outcomes that are consistent with implicit norms for allocation, such as equity or equality (Adams, 1966). Secondly, procedural justice refers to voice during a decision making process, influencing over the outcome (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). In other words, procedural justice means the fairness of means and procedures by which the decision are made. Thirdly, interactional justice refers to the perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment from those administering the procedures used to arrive at certain outcomes (Bies & Moag, 1986). This type of justice reflects the degree to which people feel that they are treated with respect and dignity by authority figures (De Cremer *et al.*, 2007).

Distributive justice is concerned with the reality that not all workers are treated alike; the allocation of outcomes is differentiated in the workplace. Individuals are concerned with whether or not they received their "just share." Sometimes things are distributively just, as when the most qualified person is promoted. Other times they are not, as when advancement goes to corporate insiders with a political relationship to upper management. Therefore in distributive justice, comparison and the criteria taken as references are important concepts. The person that is taken as a reference point for comparison of earnings and investments is another worker in the organization (Akanbi, Ayobami, Ofoegbu, & Onyema, 2013).

Procedural justice, on the other hand is concerned with the fairness of procedures. People's perceptions of the fairness of the procedures used to determine the outcomes they receive. A just process is one that is applied consistently to all, free of bias, accurate, representative of relevant stakeholders, correctable and consistent with ethical norms. Though surprising to some, research has shown that just procedures can mitigate the ill effects of unfavorable outcomes (Crompanzano, *et al.*, 2007). Kim and Mauborgne (2005) explain that procedural justice (a belief that a fair process has been followed) lead to intellectual and emotional recognition. This, in turn, creates the trust and commitment that build voluntary cooperation in strategy execution. Procedural injustice, on the other hand, produces "intellectual and emotional indignation," resulting in "distrust and resentment". Ultimately, this reduces cooperation in strategy execution.

Finally, the last aspect of organizational justice concerns how employees perceive the relationship that exists in the organization. This is the people's perceptions of the fairness of the manner in which they are treated by others (typically, authority figures). It refers to how one person treats another. A person is interactionally just, if he or she appropriately shares information and avoids rude or cruel remarks. In other words, there are two aspects of interactional justice (Colquitt, Scott, Judge & Shaw, 2006). The first part, sometimes called informational justice refers to whether one is truthful and provides adequate justifications when things go badly (Farndale *et al.*, 2010:6); the second part, sometimes called interpersonal justice, refers to the respect and dignity with which one treats another.

Interactional justice also relates to the aspects of communication process between the source and the recipient of justice, such as politeness, honesty, and respect. Because interactional justice is determined by the manager's behavior, this kind of justice is related to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reaction to management or in other words supervisor.

The relationship between organizational justice and job performance has been tested by some studies, where results of regression analysis revealed that distributive justice has a significant and positive effect on task performance ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.513$, $p < .01$), procedural justice is found to be significant and positive effect on contextual performance ($\hat{\alpha} = 0.385$, $p < .01$) (Nasurdin and Khuan, 2007) while interactional justice had direct effect on task performance (paths coefficients $\gamma = .10$, $p < .05$) (Wang *et al.*, 2011).

2.2 Empirical Review

Irawanto (2015) looked at employee participation in decision making in two state-owned enterprises in Indonesia, to see what impact these trends actually have in the real life of both the organization and the employees. It was revealed that the lower the education of the respondents, the higher their involvement in Participation in giving information (-0.393 ; $p < 0.01$); the lower the education of the respondents, the higher their involvement in Consultation participation (-0.388 ; $p < 0.01$).

Van den Berg, van Witteloostuijn, Boone, and Van der Brempt (2011) used international comparative research to examine the distinctive features of four neighboring countries with respect to their industrial relations systems. It was found that Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, despite the implementation of the EU Directive on Information and Consultation rights, display a large variation in their institutional setting, resulting in very different characteristics regarding worker involvement at establishment level. Depending on the country at issue, workers councils or joint consultative committees exert influence in very different degrees, and the power of trade unions differs substantially. The existing theoretical framework that dominates empirical work does not consider these differences. Moreover, existing empirical work primarily focuses on the effects of the mere presence of a worker representation body on organizational outcomes, not taking into account differences in the actual functioning of these worker bodies. The underlying study demonstrates that variances in (formal and informal) rights and in-group dynamics will greatly impact the effectiveness of any form of employee representation.

However, the above study (Van den Berg, *et al.*, 2011) focused on employee participation among organization found in developed countries. There was need to focus on types of employee participation among the civil servants in the developing countries like Kenya.

Kim, MacDuffie, and Pil, (2010) examined team voice in terms of team influence on key work-related issues and representative voice via the degree of worker representatives' influence on multiple collective voice issues using data collected through the International Automotive Assembly Plant Study . The study was built on the European tradition of examining both direct and indirect voice and their implications for valued organizational outcomes. It was found that neither type of voice bears a significant relationship to labor productivity when examined solely but that team voice significantly contributes to enhanced worker efficiency when considered in conjunction with representative voice. Critical to note, however, is that employee voice is just one type of employee participation. Therefore, it ought to be looked at in conjunction with other types of employee participation so that the predominating type of participation can be revealed.

Gichaba (2013) sought to establish the perceived influence of trade unions on terms and conditions of service and job security of employees at Kisii University. The study found that there is a significant ($p < 0.05$) influence of trade unions on terms and conditions (Adjusted R-squared: 0.8356 F-statistic: 2.801 on 24 and 32 df, p-value: 0.006358); and a significant influence ($p < 0.05$)

on improved job security (Adjusted R-squared: 0.8356 F-statistic: 2.801 on 24 and 32 DF, p-value: 0.006358).

Further, Kubaison, Gachunga, and Odhiambo (2014) explored the degree to which direct employee participation practices in the organization contribute to organizational performance in Government owned corporations in Kenya. Direct participation schemes in the organization include empowerment of individuals through attitude surveys, suggestion schemes and use of various work teams. It was found that the use of direct individual-based participation schemes has a positive effect on performance of state corporations with a gradient of 0.339. This implies that a unit change in the use of direct individual-based participation schemes increases performance of state corporations at the rate of 0.339. The goodness-of-fit (GOF) namely R-square for direct individual-based participation scheme was computed and established to be 0.116. This means that 11.6% of variation in performance of state corporations can be explained by the use of direct individual-based employee participation. The remaining 88.4% is explained by the other variables, namely: direct team-based participation, indirect participation schemes, financial participation and employee attitude. Similarly, the results of correlation coefficients of the relationship between dependent variable (organizational performance) and independent variables were 0.341 (Direct individual-based participation), and 0.429 (direct team-based participation). The two independent variables were found to have significant correlation with organizational performance against P-values of .000.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

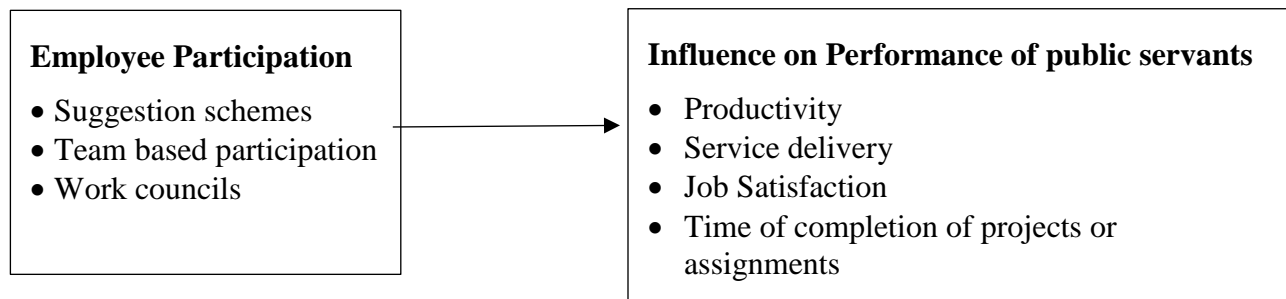


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

The study was carried out within interpretive paradigm and employed descriptive and explanatory survey design. It was descriptive because data was collected through a detailed questionnaire which describes research questions, guided by hypotheses derived from adopted theories. Further, the study was explanatory since it sought to explain the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and public servants performance. The study population comprised of section heads in the 10 departments, ward administrators and members of public service board in Vihiga County, Kenya. Vihiga County has eight members of public service board, 359 heads of sections and 25 ward administrators (Vihiga County Staffing Statistics Report, 2013). This study

targeted all the 25 ward administrators, 359 section heads and eight (8) members of public service board. Accordingly, the target population of the study was three hundred and ninety two (392).

This study adopted Yamane (1967; cited in Israel, 2013) formula to calculate the sample size of participants (heads of sections and ward administrators) to obtain 204 respondents. The study used a closed ended questionnaire, and the questionnaire was intended to solicit responses relating to how strategic human resource management practices influence performance of public servants in Vihiga County. The questionnaire developed was based on multiple-item scales and summated ratings (Likert Scale) to quantify the construct(s) of opinions of respondents regarding the study variables. To ensure instrument validity and reliability, the researcher carried out a pilot study using 19 respondents (6 ward administrators and another 13 heads of sections) selected through purposive random sampling technique from Shinyalu Sub County in Kakamega County. The pilot testing of the questionnaire was carried out on 6 ward administrators and 13 heads of sections purposely selected from Shinyalu Sub County. Primary data was obtained from the respondents using structured questionnaire. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 =Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was were presented for answering by respondents.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the measures in the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1995). Data analysis was done using SPSS. The study conducted normal distribution test for the dependent variable for normality distribution. The particular descriptive statistics used included frequencies and percentages while the particular inferential statistics included Pearson correlation analysis and regression. Correlation analysis was used to establish either positive or negative relationships between the variables. The following diagnostic tests were conducted prior data regression analysis. Multicollinearity was tested using variance inflation factor VIF. The test for autocorrelation was performed to establish whether residuals are correlated across time (autocorrelation).

The regression model that was used was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Performance of public servants

X = Employee Participation

β = Coefficient of the variable

ε = Error term

4.0 Results and findings

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The objective of the study sought to establish the influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which the employee participation indicators have influenced performance of employees in their sections. A Likert scale with specific options (1 = Very small extent, 2 = Small extent, 3 = neither small nor large extent, 4 = Large extent and 5 = Very Large extent) was used and the mean response rate from the respondents calculated. For purposes of interpretation 4 & 5 (Large extent and Very Large extent) were grouped together as

large extent, 1 & 2 (Very small extent and Small extent) were grouped as small extent while 3 was neither small nor large extent. The study results are as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Participation

Statement	Very small extent	Small extent	Neither small nor large extent	Large extent	Very large extent	Mean	Std. Dev
Involvement of employees in discussing their issues	18.50%	29.00%	19.10%	19.80%	13.60%	2.81	1.32
Involvement of employee representatives in discussing their issues	18.50%	21.00%	26.50%	29.00%	4.90%	2.81	1.19
Share ownership in organization based SACCOs, etc.	20.40%	19.80%	27.80%	22.20%	9.90%	2.81	1.27
Sharing with employees organizational profits, bonuses, or any other gains	38.30%	17.30%	25.90%	14.20%	4.30%	2.29	1.23
Conducive terms and conditions of work	29.00%	17.30%	24.70%	21.00%	8.00%	2.62	1.31
Personally negotiated terms and conditions of work	30.90%	20.40%	22.80%	18.50%	7.40%	2.51	1.30
Work consultation councils formed by employees design how work is carried out	25.30%	26.50%	22.80%	19.80%	5.60%	2.54	1.22
Allocation of tasks by joint work councils	26.50%	18.50%	35.20%	16.00%	3.70%	2.52	1.15

Results in Table 1 shows that majority 47.5% (18.5% + 29.0%) indicated that involvement of employees in discussing their issues has influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.81 with a standard deviation of 1.32. Thirty nine point five percent (39.5%) of the respondents indicated that involvement of employee representatives in discussing their issues has influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.81 with a standard deviation of 1.19. Forty point two percent (40.2%) of the respondents indicated that Share ownership in organization based SACCOs, etc .has influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.81 with a standard deviation of 1.27. Another 55.6% of the respondents indicated that sharing organizational profits, bonuses, or any other gains with employees influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.29 with a standard deviation of 1.23.

In addition, the results revealed that 46.3% of the respondents indicated that Conducive terms and conditions of work have influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.62 with a standard deviation of 1.31. Fifty one point three percent (51.3%) of the respondents indicated that personally negotiated terms and conditions of work influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.51 with a standard deviation of 1.30. Fifty one point eight percent (51.8%) of the respondents indicated that work consultation councils formed by employees design how work is carried out influenced employee performance to a

small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.22. 45% of the respondents indicated that allocation of tasks by joint work councils had influenced employee performance to a small extent. The results had a mean response of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 1.16. Van den Berg, *et al.*, (2011) warns that active participation as opposed to mere presence in management meetings is essential in ensuring employee satisfaction and consequently performance.

4.2 Correlations Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried out to detect the association between the dependent variable, performance of public servants and the independent variable of employee participation as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Employee Performance	Employee Participation
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Employee Participation	Pearson Correlation	0.573**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

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

Correlation results showed that there was a positive and significant association between employee participation and employee performance ($r = 0.573$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$).

4.3 Diagnostic Tests

4.3.1 Test of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is a statistical phenomenon in which two or more predictor variable in a multiple regression model are highly correlated, the undesirable situation where the correlations among the independent variables are strong. A set of variables is perfectly multicollinear if there exists one or more exact linear relationship among some of the variables. Tolerance of the variable and the VIF value were used where values more than 0.2 for Tolerance and values less than 10 for VIF means that there is no multicollinearity.

For multiple regressions to be applicable there should not be collinearity among variables. Statistics used to measure multicollinearity include tolerance and variance inflation factor. From the findings, the all the variables had a tolerance values >0.2 and VIF values <10 as shown in Table 3. Indicating that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variable (Employee participation).

Table 3: Multicollinearity test using Tolerance and VIF

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Employee participation	0.737	1.357

Results in Table 3 shows that all the tolerance values were above 0.2 and VIF less than 10 and thus, there were no collinearity among the independent variables.

4.3.2 Test of Normality

Normality test was conducted first using histogram representation. Results are shown in Figure 2.

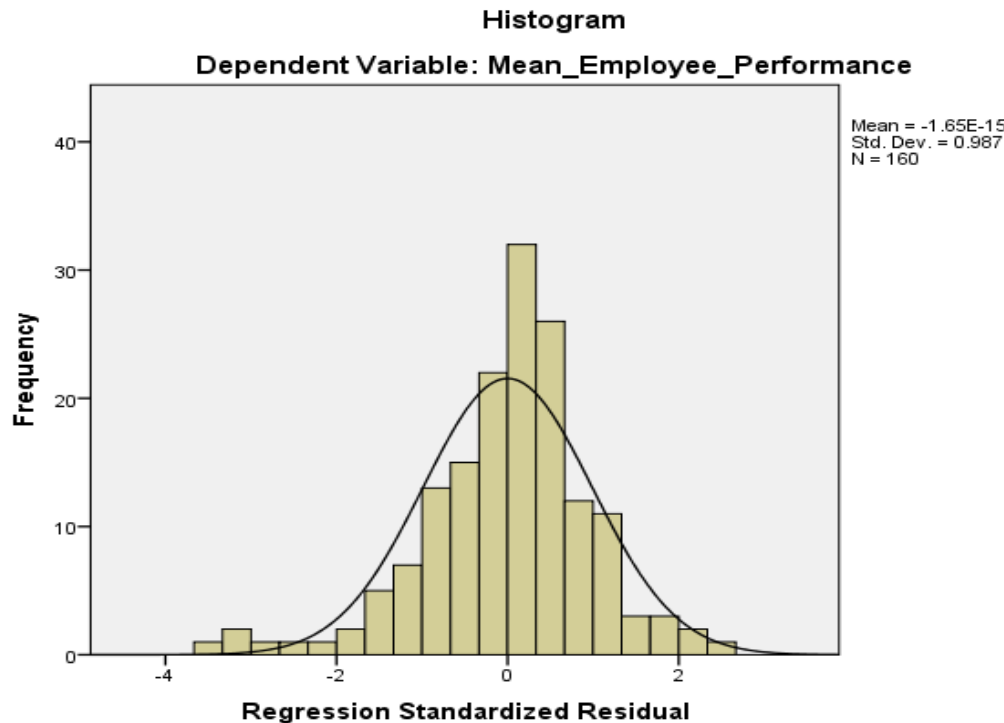


Figure 2: Histogram test of normality

The test for normality was examined using the graphical method approach as shown in the Figure 2. The results in the figure indicate that the residuals are normally distributed.

4.3.3 Test of Heteroscedasticity

The error process may be Homoscedastic within cross-sectional units, but its variance may differ across units: a condition known as group wise Heteroscedasticity. The hettest command calculates Breuch Pagan for group wise Heteroscedasticity in the residuals. Heteroscedasticity test was run in order to test whether the error terms are correlated across observation in the panel data. The null hypothesis is that the data does not suffer from Heteroscedasticity since the p-value is greater than the 5%. Results in Table 4 shows that null hypothesis was not rejected at a critical p-value of 0.05 since the reported value was $0.9544 > 0.05$. Thus, the data did not suffer from Heteroscedasticity.

Table 4: Heteroscedasticity Results

Breuch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity	
H ₀ : Constant variance	
Variables: fitted values of Employee Performance.	
chi2(1)	= 0.000

Prob > chi2 = 0.9544

4.3.4 Auto-correlation

Autocorrelation the relationship between values separated from each other by a given time lag in the residual (prediction errors) from a regression analysis. Durbin Watson test is used to check serial correlation among variables. When error terms from different (usually adjacent) time periods (or cross-section observation) are correlated, then it is said that the error term is serially correlated. Serial correlation will not affect the biasness or consistency of ordinary least squares (OLS) estimator, but it affects their efficiency. To use a linear model, there should be no serial correlation among the observations. In table 5, the dependent variable must be independent and this was tested using Durbin-Watson (d) test which state that d=2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. The value of (d) always lies between 0 and 4 where 0 indicates autocorrelation while above 1 indicates the residuals (prediction errors) are interdependent, the results from the study presented d=1.714 which indicates that the residuals are interdependent.

Table 5: Durbin Watson test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.721	0.52	0.508	0.50211	1.714

4.4 Inferential Analysis

4.4.1 Fitness of Model

The results presented in Table 6 present the fitness of the regression model used in explaining the variation of performance of public servants as a result of employee participation.

Table 6: Model Fitness for Employee Participation

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.573	0.328	0.324	0.59186

4.4.2 Analysis of Variance

From the results in Table 6, employee participation was found to be satisfactory in explaining performance of public servants. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 32.8%. This means that employee participation explain 32.8% of the variations in the dependent variable which is performance of public servants. Similar findings that show positive outcomes of participation through teams or representatives have been attained in several studies. Using data collected through the International Automotive Assembly Plant, Kim, *et al* (2010) found that team voice significantly contributes to enhance worker efficiency among automotive plants in Europe when considered in conjunction with representative voice. Table 7 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA)

Table 7: Analysis of Variance for Employee Participation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	27.402	1	27.402	78.225	0.000
Residual	56.047	160	0.35		

Total	83.449	161
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Results in Table 7 indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variable (employee participation) is a good predictor of performance of public servants. This was supported by F-calculate value of 78.225 which was greater than the F-critical (obtained from the F-distribution table) of 3.94 and the reported p-value of 0.000 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level. These findings tend to suggest that participation in the form of suggestion schemes, team based participation, and work councils have significant influence on employee performance. Similar finding was revealed in Quagraine (2010) in a study to determine the impact of employee involvement as a management tool in decision-making in Ghana. The study revealed that, involvement of employees in decision-making contributes to effective decision implementation and an enabling environment for creativity, which is essential for enhanced performance. However, Van den Berg, *et al.*, (2011) warns that active participation as opposed to mere presence in management meetings is essential in ensuring employee satisfaction and consequently performance.

Regression coefficients result for employee participation is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Regression Coefficient Result for Employee Participation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.457	0.145		10.05	0.000
Employee Participation	0.431	0.049	0.573	8.844	0.000

$$Y = 1.457 + 0.431x_1$$

Where Y = Performance of Public Servants

x_1 = Employee Participation

Regression coefficients results in Table 8 revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between employee participation and performance of public servants. ($\beta_2 = 0.431$, $p = 0.000$). This means that a unit increase in employee participation, would lead to an improvement in performance of public servants by 0.431 units. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 8.844, which is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96 (obtained from t-student distribution table). Influence of trade unions on ensuring better terms of working conditions and improved job security for employees was revealed in a study done by Gichana (2013) among workers in Kisii University and performance is industry based: that is whether service or manufacturing industry.

Further, key informant interviews was done and it emerged that employee involvement in the county is through the workers' union. This was indicated by one KI, that:

Representatives of Vihiga County Workers' Union act on behalf of the workers during instances like negotiations, management of the relationship of workers themselves, and consultation among others (KI₁).

Representation through workers' union seems to be the main method through which employees can voice their needs to the administration of Vihiga County, Kenya. The interviewed members of the public service board consider this set up as appropriate in learning the needs of the employees, as one of them indicated:

Employee involvement through their representatives helps the county government to make popular decisions like during promotions or internal appointments (KI₂).

This seems to imply that decision making by Vihiga County, Kenya is participatory based. Such decisions could therefore receive acceptance from all the employees. One KI succinctly asserted that:

Employee involvement make the employees own the given tasks, services, and decisions among others. This leads to satisfaction among employees (KI₃).

Based on these findings, it can be deduced that members of the public service board in Vihiga County have prepared a communication mode that enables employees to be adequately consulted in any decision making process. This therefore seem to enable the employees participate in day-to-day decision-making process that involve their work life. These findings seem to resonate with procedural justice as well as interactional justice. The former is concerned with the fairness perceived by employees with regard to procedures used to determine the outcomes they receive. According to Crompanzano, (2007), a just process is one that is applied consistently to all, representative of relevant stakeholders, correctable and consistent with ethical norms among others.

The latter concerns how employees perceive the relationship that exists in the organization: the perception of fairness of the manner in which they are treated by the authority. Colquitt, et al (2006) had argued that interactional justice is practiced through appropriate sharing of information and avoidance of rude or cruel remarks. This, according to Colquitt et al, results out of the provision of adequate justifications when handling grievances as well as enhancement of interpersonal relationships. It touches on the communication between the management and the subordinates. Such communication as practiced, the workers union seems to be appropriate for the employees of Vihiga County, Kenya.

Similar findings that show positive outcomes of participation through teams or representatives have been attained in several studies. Using data collected through the International Automotive Assembly Plant, Kim, (2010) found that team voice significantly contributes to enhance worker efficiency among automotive plants in Europe when considered in conjunction with representative voice. Influence of trade unions on ensuring better terms of working conditions and improved job security for employees was revealed in a study done by Gichana (2013) among workers in Kisii University.

Equally, direct team-based participation was also found to have significant correlations with organizational performance among state corporations in Kenya (Kubaison, 2014). However, a contrasting finding was obtained by Poutsma, (2011) from a large cross-national database covering 32 countries. Representative participation was found to have slight negative relationships with the performance measures (operational performance and profitability). It can therefore be deduced that the relationship between participation and performance is industry based: that is whether service or manufacturing industry.

4.4.3 Hypothesis Testing for Employee Participation

H₀: There is no significant influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using simple regression results in Table 8 and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criteria was that, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the H₀ but if it is less than 0.05, the H₀ is rejected. The null hypothesis was that there is no significant influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya. Results in Table 8 show that the p-value was 0.000. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 5.545, which is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and thus concluded that there is a significant influence of employee participation on performance of public servants in Vihiga County, Kenya.

Similar finding was revealed in Quagraine (2010) in a study to determine the impact of employee involvement as a management tool in decision-making in Ghana. The study revealed that, involvement of employees in decision-making contributes to effective decision implementation and an enabling environment for creativity, which is essential for enhanced performance.

5.0 Conclusions

The study concluded that employee participation has a positive and significant effect on the performance of public servants. From the findings, the study concludes that the county government has used employee participation to a small extent. By allowing employee participation through the trade union, the management of the County may make popular decisions with regard to promotions and internal appointment of employees, among others.

6.0 Recommendations

The study found out that there was a positive relationship between it and performance of public servants, although the size of this influence was relatively small. It also emerged that participation through trade unions enable the county to make popular decisions on employee promotions and appointments. The study, therefore, recommends that for purposes of ensuring that employee participation influence performance of public servants to a large extent, team based participation should be embraced in order to provide employee voice alongside the trade union.

7.0 References

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