



EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN CLEANING SERVICE COMPANIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The basic purpose of employee performance is to enrich the life of employees and to keep them happy and contented. Employee performance is regarded as a force that pushes the employees toward meeting particular goals and objectives of any organization. Cleaning industry is the most ignored sector especially by many researchers who normally focuses their studies on the renowned companies or organizations. It is generally accepted that cleaning services companies are increasingly outsourced and important in terms of employment, wealth creation, and the development of innovation. However many problems encounter this companies and as a result, it leads to poor employee performance. In addition it is generally known and accepted that there is a high mortality rate of cleaning services companies within the first two years. Of late the cleaning services companies have been marred by a lot of complaints from the organizations that have contracted them to provide the said services. Among observed trends are the rate of absenteeism is so high among their employees, cleaners coming in late, high rate of employee turnover and deteriorations of the overall cleanliness hence poor performance ratings from the clients who are not satisfied. Given this high failure rate, it becomes vital to research on the determinants of the employee performance in cleaning services companies in Kenya specifically Nairobi County. The specific objective was to find out how employee empowerment affects employee performance at workplace limited to twenty three cleaning services companies in Kenya, Nairobi County. The study employed a descriptive research design to achieve the objectives. The target population under study was 2000 employees. The study used a questionnaire to collect the required data from a sample of 333 employees. The questionnaire was pilot tested to ascertain the reliability of research instrument using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected was coded, quantified and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was analyzed by the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study concluded that employee empowerment has significant effect on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. From the results, this study recommended that the management cleaning service companies in Kenya should ensure they offer competitive pay, bonuses and insurance policies. In addition, the management cleaning service companies in Kenya should ensure regular staff training of employees to enhance their productivity.

Key Words: employee performance, employee empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Effective performance management is designed to enhance performance, identify performance requirements, provide feedback relevant to those requirements and assist with career development (Ainsworth, Smith and Millership, 2018). The idea is that performance management is best served by developing a system that is interactive and capable of resolving performance related issues. Organizations make investments in their human capital to improve performance and target higher niches in the market through delivery of high quality services (Appelbaum, Bailey and Berg, 2015).

Many organisations globally today are strongly affected by outsourcing (Christensen & Læg Reid 2017, Kamp et al. 2016). This increases the competition and puts a great deal of emphasis on low prices, which leads to change the work situation for many occupational groups. The cleaning business is no exception and outsourcing of public cleaning services has become more common, as public organizations try to reduce their costs by focusing on their core business and outsourcing activities that are considered to play a supporting role (Aguiar & Herod 2016, Ryan 2017, Sjøgaard et al. 2016). In Sweden the outsourcing of private cleaning services has become a very strong trend, and many municipalities in Sweden have outsourced cleaning services today due to both financial and political reasons (Sundin & Rapp 2016). The cleaning sector, like the industrial sector, has also started to adopt lean, or lean-inspired, organizational strategies as an attempt to save time and money (Aguiar & Herod 2016). To increase their competitiveness, these companies have focused on factors like quality, hygiene, and the cleaners' work environment.

According to the SWEA questionnaire survey among Swedish employees (SWEA 2018a), cleaners are also the occupational group that rank their own work as least meaningful: only 36% of cleaners answered that their work felt meaningful, compared to a mean of 69% for all occupational groups. Cleaners were also least satisfied with their occupation—only 57% their work as monotonous, compared to the overall mean value of 20%; 27% say they compared to a mean value of 75% for the survey population as a whole. Furthermore, 61% of cleaners described feel uncomfortable when going to work, compared to the overall mean of 17%. These social factors are seldom further investigated in cleaning work, and recommendations for how to increase autonomy and social support for cleaners are hard to find in the literature.

In Canada, employee performance affects the overall performance of an organization and its bottom-line (Purcell and Hutchison 2017). Employee performance is influenced by motivation. Armstrong (2019) points out that motivation is concerned with the strength and direction of behavior and the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways. Buchner (2017) points to control theory as a basis for critically assessing performance feedback provided through performance management.

In Ghana, Employees are regarded as one of the most imperative assets of any company. The prosperity of any organization depends largely on the employee's qualities, capabilities and skills which can be measured by their performance. (Mosley, Pietri & Mosley Jnr, 2017). Employees working in an organization might have different set of skills, knowledge and abilities. In most African Context, Some have different modes of working and can perform with the highest proficiency regardless of the incentive while others may have an irregular tendency of working. Performance is a significant factor in every organizational success. The outcome can be of greater productivity and boosted employee morale if the performance of the employees is accelerated effectively. Employees are also more loyal to companies who care for their personal growth and career development, no matter how small or large the organization is.

In Nigeria, Hidayah (2018) revealed that the root causes of poor performance in cleaning services are intricate, nontransparent, poor employee motivation, organizational factors, poor human resource management and unaccountable procedures. In Zambia, Rehman, Ullah and Abrar-ul-haq (2015) indicates that Individual characteristics influence organization performance and job satisfaction. Employee performance level in 2005 in sub-Saharan Africa economies was the lowest among all regions. They further emphasized the need to pay more attention on monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual attributes and job satisfaction.

According to Mutsostso, and Wanyama, (2018), traditionally most reward and recognition programs were vague and often given in response to managers' perception of when an employee performed exceptionally well. There were no set standards by which exceptional performance could be measured, and it could have meant anything from consistent punctuality, assisting other departments or even having a good attitude. While according to Bandiera, Barankay, and Rasul (2019), things have changed in current organizations as organizations understand the great benefits achieved by incorporating rewards, job satisfaction, motivation and performance with their business strategies. To achieve desired organizational goals, reward systems should be perfectly aligned to organizational strategies (Tepper, Moss, & Duffy, 2018).

Bruce (2016) points out that under-management is the underlying issue in most cases of suboptimal work performance at all levels. The undermanaged employee struggles since the supervisor is not sufficiently engaged to provide the direction and support needed. In their study Gupta (2019) notes that cohesion has a significant positive impact on performance. An employee operating in an environment that has good team cohesion is likely to dedicate effort towards realizing the expected performance levels. Performance appraisal plays a significant role in defining an employee's performance. Training facilitates the updating of skills and lead to increase commitment, wellbeing, and sense of belonging, thus directly strengthening the organization's competitiveness (Kadikiny, 2018). Training has the distinct role in the achievement of an organizational goal by incorporating the interests of organization and the workforce (Jakfar, 2016).

The primary role of training is to improve the employees' skill for current and future duties and responsibilities. Adam and Nurdin, (2019) argued that despite the fact that sustaining high performance is a competence that is learnable, it is a significant concern that many organizations are still unable to sustain this high performance. There are three main reasons underlying this concern. First, the organization's vision and strategy are not well supported by the organizational processes and systems as a result thereof, the organization focuses and measures issues which are wrong or rather irrelevant.

Statement of the Problem

For the last one decade there has been mushrooming of cleaning companies in Kenya either owned by individuals, partners and while others are 'briefcases' providing professional cleaning services to various clients (Chandrasekar, 2017). Within the Kenyan context some cleaning companies like Parapet, Metro and One Way have demonstrated sound management practices characterized by good governance practices, quality staff, having clear visions and missions, financial stability among other factors (Njeri, 2016). However, employees change of behavior have risen hence the cleanness of the institutions that assigned them duties or contracts are not well catered for on time, employees late coming, employees 'absenteeism rate is high, employees have continually been taking leave without informing their managers and resignation from employment is getting higher than before. This has hampered the performance of this services bring down the companies to its knees.

Kenya's vision 2030 is Kenya's current blueprint for the future of economic growth. Its goal is to create a prosperous and globally competitive nation with a high quality of life by the year 2030 (Vision 2030, 2017). To do this, it aims to transform Kenyan industry while creating a clean and secure environment. The cleaning service companies play a significant role in achieving the social pillar that aims to improve the quality of life for all Kenyans. This is by targeting health and environment (Vision 2030, 2017).

According to Kadikiny (2018), argues that in the study of 100 local NGOs in Kenya through a cross section of survey, cleaning services companies has helped to create more than 5000 jobs and contributed to the economic development of the country. If the employee performance goes down it means the government will not able to collect the taxes hence the Gross Domestic Product (GDP); which is 5% of the total GDP of Kenya according International to Association of Cleaners and Property Maintenance {IACPM} will be affected negatively by hence affecting the country to achieve set target of vision 2030. If the GDP grows it means the country will save itself from over borrowing of loans which is a burden to common 'Mwananchi' especially the lower cadre employees like cleaners who merely survive on one dollar per day. According to Ainsworth, Smith and Millership (2018), improving the workplace environment increases productivity. Therefore, the performance of employees in cleaning companies improves their productivity and creates conducive work environment for other companies and as a result it affects country's development; cleaning service companies have chain effect.

Few studies have been conducted in Kenya on the determinants of employee performance in different sectors. For instance; Kadikiny (2018) conducted a study on the strategy institutionalization of cleaning service firms in Nairobi City County; Anunda (2017) investigated on the factors affecting employee performance in micro and SMEs companies in Kenya and revealed that employee retention strategies leadership and employee motivation influence employee performance.

The essence of such study helps to bridge the gap in knowledge, information and provide the basis for cleaning companies to improve on the employee performance hence help in solving the issues of high rate of employee turnover, absenteeism, and punctuality to improve on customer satisfaction. The current study therefore sought to analyze the determinants of employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya focus on the specific aspects such as monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual characteristics and job satisfaction.

Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the effect of employee empowerment on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Goal Setting Theory

Locke (1968) presented the goal setting method and believes that the intentions to work towards the objectives are key sources of job motivation. Fundamentally, the exact goals increase work productivity and that is to say that the specific hard goals produce an improved level of output than does the comprehensive goal of just "do the best".

The specific goal itself acts as an internal stimulus and thus establishes the motivation force to staff members. Employees will perform better when they get feedback on how well they

are developing toward their goals since feedback supports to identify any differences between what they have done and what they want to do. Therefore, feedback performances to guide behavior, therefore, the objective setting theory pre-suppose that a distinct is committed to the objectives, and is resolute not to lower or abandon the goal.

On goal-setting theory application, Management by Objectives (MBO) is one way of doing it (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2018). However, goal setting model has inferences for the design and conduct of staff assessment system and MBO methods focus on the accomplishment of agreed or negotiated performance targets. Some other approaches are learning theories that state that managers can develops employee motivation and performance by the way they link the outcomes that employees receive to the performance of desired behaviours in the company and goal realizations. Consequently, learning theory makes the efforts to connect between performance and outcomes in the motivational equation. According to (Hannagan, 2014) inferred that at present goal-setting is one of the most dominant theories of work motivation pertinent to all cultures.

According to Meyer (2016), another tool for staff retention is employee empowerment through training .Training may help staff to become more competent and to enjoy their work even better. They may gain confidence in their work which in turn may boost their morale. Reducing staff turnover will benefit business and save money. Moreover, replacing staff is costly and valuable skills are lost. By providing staff with training and development they are more likely to be keen to take on greater responsibilities more suited to promotion or career progression. Staff may become confident and motivated and they may not rely too much on supervision. The costs associated with staff turnover are simply huge, taking into account the costs of recruitment, training and absence combined with average salaries and attrition rates.

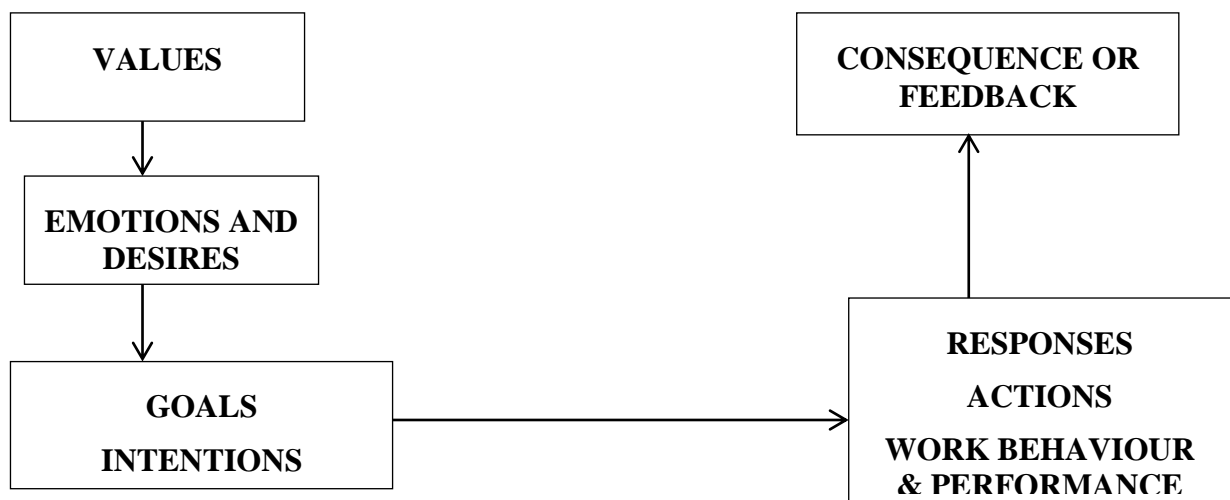
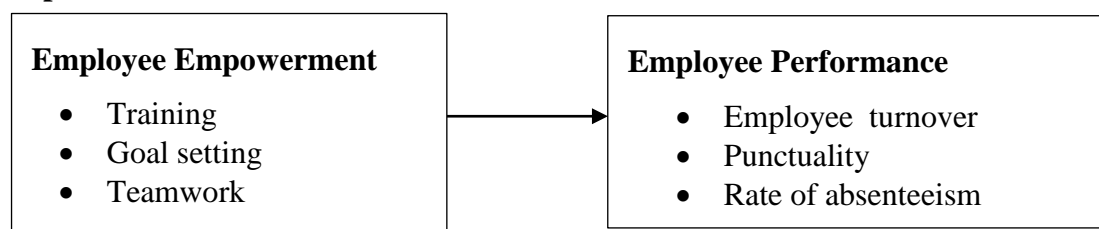


Figure 1: Locke’s Theory of Goal-Setting

Conceptual Framework



Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment creates a working environment in which the employee assumes or shares ownership of specific tasks and projects. Ideally, this empowerment increases the employees' sense of responsibility enhances their morale and improves the quality of the work product (Githuka, 2017). Granting more power creates employees who are more invested in the company and its success. By tapping the expertise, intuition and knowledge base of their employees, organizations can create an army of creative go-getters who are unafraid to assume accountability for their output and performance

According to Mwangi (2017), employee empowerment or involvement is now becoming a contemporary issue in a today world of businesses. Everything is changing fast hence employees need to be empowered in order to feel they are part and parcel of the organization. This can be done through creativity, training innovation and even team building. This will not only make them have the right skill but also promote specialization which can become a complete advantage to the organization in the future hence the performance will be better hence they will have been motivated.

Empirical Review

Employees' empowerment or involvement deduce to the worker's feeling of being significant, effective and in control. Empowerment is a combination of four linked feelings. Autonomy results in the feeling that the individual is accountable for her choices and a sense of freedom in making selections about how to work. On the other hand, confidence is the personal feeling of having the skills to perform the job pleasingly. Meaningfulness is the employee's feeling that the duties of the job are valuable. Finally, influence is the feeling that tasks produce intended outcome (Riggio, 2014).

According to Herzberg's study, real motivators comprise of recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement, meaningful work, and growth. No matter what type of work your staffs do, you can begin to make alterations in the manner you manage and in your office that will establish a more steady and motivating work environment.

According to (Levy 2017), to truly motivate your staff to perform their best, you must develop and provide a work environment that provides meaningful work, achievement, recognition, advancement and development. You can start to establish this work environment by trying out the following six recommendations. First, make sure you comprehend the difference between motivation and reward. Second, appreciate that when people feel ownership of their work, they are more probable to own the problems that arise and take on the daily task of finding resolutions much more willingly.

Third keep in mind that taking time to get to know your employees and what they need at work will pay off big in the long run. Fourth, remember that your work is to coach, mentor and develop your staff, not to do their work for them. Fifth, set aside some time to focus on what's working. And finally, publicly acknowledge employee regularly on their performance, awarding responsibility and advancing them up in the organization as soon as they've confirmed that they can do it (Cole, 2017)

Fundamentally, workers empowerment works by giving employees the authority and freedom needed to familiarize instantly to environment, responding with better services and involvements for your clients. It requires open communication and relative understanding from the top down, in turn enabling employees to make decisive decisions on the spot. By empowering employees, businesses also need to provide tools to fundamental knowledge, process that employees know represent best practices for serving customers and authority to go the extra mile for their organization. In an organization that empowers employees, the

relationship between management and the workforce inverts. Instead of the employee working for the manager, the manager essentially supports the efforts of the employees and offers guidance when necessary. To facilitate the employees' efforts, Managers must provide adequate resources and training, and they must ensure that the employees acquire the information they need to carry out their tasks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design. According to registrar of companies (2021), there are 78 registered cleaning companies in Kenya, Nairobi County. The unit of analysis was the 78 cleaning companies with population of 2000 employees, forming representing a sample of 333, hence this form the unit of observations. The study utilized stratified sampling in the selection of the sample. Employees in the 23 cleaning services were clustered into three strata. The formula according to Yamane 1967 was employed to obtain the sample size. Questionnaires were the main instruments of data collection used. The data collected was analyzed mainly by use of quantitative and qualitative techniques and presented in tables and figures.

Qualitative data was grouped into meaningful patterns, explanatory notes and themes that were observed to help in the summarizing and organization of the data. Multiple regression analysis was used model to show the link between dependent and independent variables, the statistical summaries of the results were presented in the form of percentage and tables using computer data analysis package; Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) the regression equation is

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The questionnaires were dropped off and picked up later after they were filled by the respondents. Out of 333 questionnaires which were distributed, 321 were duly filled and returned. The drop-off and pick-up-later method yielded the high response rate of 96.4%. According to Babbie (2017), a response rate of 75 per cent is adequate for analysis as well as making conclusions and inferences about a population. In addition, Kumar (2019) indicates that a response rate of 60% and above is acceptable for analysis. Further, Egbert (2015) indicates that a response rate of 50% should be considered average, 60% to 70% considered adequate while a response rate of above 70% should be regarded as excellent. This implies that the response rate of 96.4% was adequate for analysis, drawing conclusions and reporting

Descriptive Statistics

Employee Empowerment and the Employee Performance

The second specific objective of the study was to establish the effect of employee empowerment on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. The respondents were requested to employee empowerment and the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree, and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 1.

From the study results, the respondents agreed that apprenticeship is a better method of transfer of skills and knowledge to employees ($M=4.377$, $SD=0.579$). In addition, the respondents agreed that the management trainings that they attended have benefitted them in the course of performing their duties ($M=4.346$, $SD=0.549$). Further, the respondents agreed that the employees feedback is respected ($M=4.340$, $SD=0.592$).

The respondents also agreed that the company encourages teambuilding which lead to innovativeness hence good performance ($M=4.324$, $SD=0.582$). In addition, the respondents agreed that employee in service training helps to gain higher standards in performance, ($M=4.206$, $SD=0.555$).

Table 1: Employee Empowerment and the Employee Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employee in service training helps to gain higher standards in performance	4.206	0.555
The employees feedback is respected	4.340	0.592
Apprenticeship is a better method of transfer of skills and knowledge to employees	4.377	0.579
The company encourages teambuilding which lead to innovativeness hence good performance	4.324	0.582
Management trainings that I attended have benefitted me in the course of performing my duties	4.346	0.549
Aggregate	4.311	0.559

Further, the respondents were requested to indicate how else employee involvement and participation influence employee job performance in the insurance industry in Kenya. From the results, the respondents indicated that participative decision making is an employee involvement method described as the extent to which employers engage employees in making key decisions for the organization. In addition, the respondents indicated that the goal of participative decision making is to enable the organization engage employees through involvement and consequently achieve higher job performance. Further, the respondents indicated that participative decision making is a power-sharing initiative where decision making roles are shared between senior managers and employees. The study is tandem to the study done by Millmore *et al*, (2017) who assets that engaged employee has a positive attitude towards the organization and its values. In contrast, a disengaged employee may range from someone doing the bare minimum at work (aka 'coasting'), up to an employee who is actively damaging the company's work output and reputation

Employee Performance in Cleaning Service Companies

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with various statements relating to the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree, and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were as presented in Table 2.

From the study results, the respondents agreed that high staff turnover increases work load for each employee ($M=4.231$, $SD=0.827$). In addition, the respondents agreed that the performance of each employee is caged on the punctuality ($M=4.175$, $SD=0.786$). Further, the respondents agreed that the customer complaints have hampered the performance ($M=4.100$, $SD=0.772$).

The respondents also agreed that majority of their employees can work independently and they give high performance ($M=4.097$, $SD=0.987$). In addition, the respondents agreed that target given to different employee are often met, ($M=4.012$, $SD=0.786$). Further, the respondents agreed that the efficiency and effectiveness of the work completed has improved in the last five years ($M=4.028$, $SD=0.810$).

The respondents also agreed that the rate of absenteeism affect the company’s performance ($M=4.013$, $SD=0.880$). In addition, the respondents agreed that their organization productivity has improved over the last five years, ($M=3.975$, $SD=0.651$). Further, the respondents agreed that quality of services rendered by our employees to customers has greatly improved over the last 5 years ($M=3.888$, $SD=0.925$). The respondents also agreed that employees’ competencies are in line with the organizational operational and strategic goals ($M=3.878$, $SD=0.897$).

Table 2: Employee Performance in Cleaning Service Companies

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our organization productivity has improved over the last five years	3.975	0.651
Quality of services rendered by our employees to customers has greatly improved over the last 5 years	3.888	0.925
High staff turnover increases work load for each employee	4.231	0.827
The efficiency and effectiveness of the work completed has improved in the last five years.	4.028	0.810
The customer complaints have hampered the performance	4.100	0.772
The rate of absenteeism affect the company’s performance	4.013	0.880
Majority of our employees can work independently and they give high performance	4.097	0.987
The performance of each employee is caged on the punctuality	4.175	0.786
Target given to different employee are often met	4.012	0.786
Employees’ competencies are in line with the organizational operational and strategic goals	3.878	0.897
Aggregate	4.112	0.843

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (employee empowerment) and (the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya) dependent variable

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients

	employee performance	employee empowerment
employee performance	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) N 321	
employee empowerment	Pearson Correlation .753** Sig. (2-tailed) .002 N 321	1 321

From the results, findings revealed that there was a very strong relationship between employee empowerment and the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya ($r = 0.753$, $p \text{ value} = 0.002$). The relationship was significant since the $p \text{ value} 0.002$ was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the results of Lee and Raschke (2016) that there is a very strong relationship between employee empowerment and employee performance

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual characteristics and job satisfaction) and (the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya) dependent variable.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.931	0.867	0.868	0.06184

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.867. This implied that 86.7% of the variation in the dependent variable (the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual characteristics and job satisfaction).

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.294	4	2.8235	64.17	.002
	Residual	9.943	226	.044		
	Total	20.237	230			

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 64.17 while the F critical was 2.412. The p value was 0.002. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.002 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Henceforth, it can be used to predict the influence of monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual characteristics and job satisfaction on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	0.249	0.088		2.830	0.001
Employee Empowerment,	0.379	0.09	0.381	4.211	0.001

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.249 + 0.379X_2 + \epsilon$$

The results also revealed that employee empowerment has significant effect on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya ($\beta_1=0.379$, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the results of Lee and Raschke (2016) that there is a very strong relationship between employee empowerment and employee performance

Conclusions

The study concludes that employee empowerment has significant effect on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. Findings revealed that employee empowerment (training, goal setting and teamwork) influences employee performance.

Recommendations

In addition, the study found that employee empowerment has significant effect on the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. This study recommends that the management cleaning service companies in Kenya should ensure regular staff training of employees to enhance their productivity.

Area for Further Studies

This study focused on analyzing the determinants of employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. However, this study was limited to employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya hence the study findings cannot be generalized to other service companies in Kenya. Therefore, the study recommends that further studies should be conducted on the analyzing the determinants of employee performance in other service companies in Kenya.

Further, the study found that the independent variables (monetary reward, employee empowerment, individual characteristics and job satisfaction) could only explain 86.7% of the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya. This study therefore suggests research on other factors affecting the employee performance in cleaning service companies in Kenya.

Further, considering cleaning industry is marred with employees who are not much exposed, it will be of help if the further research is done in their counterpart like security companies and transport sector so that the comparison can be done and concrete conclusions came up with on the issues of employee performance. This will lead to improvement on the current study and shed more light and information about employee motivation and performance at large.

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