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# DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKPLACE COUNSELING SERVICES IN KENYA: A CASE OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY GOVERNMENT MACHARIA SIMON NGUNJIRI<sup>1</sup>, DR. KEPHA OMBUI<sup>2</sup> <sup>1,2</sup> Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

#### Abstract

The study sought to investigate the determinants of effective implementation of workplace counseling at the Nairobi City County Government. The study used the descriptive research design since it was dealing with responses using statistics. The methodology and designs that the researcher used in conducting the research included the research design, population target, sampling design, and data collection instruments and procedures and data analysis. Data collected was analyzed by aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V22). Questionnaires were used in collecting data. The researcher was able to administer and collect complete questionnaires for the analysis and conduct key informant interviews. The study found that employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions influences the implementation of counseling services. The study recommend that The counsellor should ensure that the counselling atmosphere is warm and conducive for communication. Encourage the employee to gain insight into the problem, in so doing avoiding cutting of employee's comments. Suggest positive steps that would lead to solving the problem or improve performance, avoiding giving the employee false hope. Create a desire for change in the employee by giving support that could lead to efficiency, not expecting a dramatic change in the employee's performance because of a single counselling session.

Keyword: Counseling, Constraints, Employer, Employee, Performance, Workplace, Work-related issues.

# Introduction

As the world is shrinking through globalization, more and more people live and work together in workplace and thus they continually come into contact with people from diverse cultural origins, involving language, norms and lifestyle, dynamic working conditions and wellbeing of employees. The rapidly changing global marketplace, characterized by increased technological advancement, requires organizations to demand a more flexible and competent workforce to be adaptive and to remain competitive (Singh, Winkel & Selvanrajan, 2013). This is greatly achieved by adopting workplace counseling for achievement of the organization objectives.

Workplace counseling has long been a positive tool for maintenance of sanity at the workplace. Workplace counseling is a strategy to help workers who have problems that affect their productivity at work. Some of these Constraints may range from work related stress, loss and grief, restructuring and organization of the institution, internal and external transfers, relationships (both formal and informal), trauma which make many employees unhappy today due to lack of promotions, lack of incentives in the form of money, lack of recognition, and are less empowered in decision making in organizations (Balakrishanan, 2010).

Counselling is a profession which has a distinct body of knowledge, including theories, ethical considerations and standard and a code of conduct. In most countries including Kenya, there are two known professional bodies that register counsellors and the profession is also regulated by an act of parliament-Kenya Psychologists and Counsellors Act 2013). According to Nyasha *et al.* (2013) speak out that workplace counseling is a way of relating and responding to an employee or colleague so that he or she explores his or her thoughts, feelings, and behavior to reach a clear self-understanding. Counseling in the workplace helps to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, improve mental health, lower levels of sickness and increase job satisfaction and commitment (McLeod, 2013). Research done by John McLeod has encouragingly displayed the benefits of workplace counseling for organizations such as reducing stress, sickness, absence but increasing job commitment and satisfaction (Coles, 2010).

Work pressure and stress causes physical illness such as heart disease, hypertension, and headache. The stress also causes impairment of the employee's performance within the organization. Managers or supervisors should be sensitive to signs of mental or physical illnesses or negative behavior and provide assistance in the form of counseling so that the diseases do not increase. These psychological realities that are present in the workplace context include projections, transference, counter-transference, low self-esteem, anger, depression, anxiety, stress, negative behavior and burn-outs. The aims of counseling largely rest on solving the diverse problems of people which include gaining insight, achieving self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-actualization, acquisition of social skills, achieving cognitive and behavior change, empowerment and possible systemic change (Geldard & Geldard, 2010).

Counseling is primarily, in accordance with British Association of Counseling and Psychotherapy (2012), to 'explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose.' It deals with fundamental impasses of human functioning resulting from in-depth understanding of the authentic self (Coles, 2013) and basic restructuring of personality (Orlans, 2010). Since workplace is a significant domain of a person's world, the inner world of a person and family life may be reflected by work relationship and vice versa (Walker & Jacobs, 2013). Thus, employees' private incidents will naturally but covertly affect organizational effectiveness.

Although counseling is commonly used to tackle stress, it has been reported that in some organizations, employees may be concerned that going for counseling will be viewed as a weakness and will have a negative effect upon career advancement and also Workplace counseling is fast becoming the epicenter of counseling elsewhere (Oramah, 2013) its emergence within the Sub Saharan African context requires a serious consideration of its problems which include conflict of values, counselor competency problem, workplace counseling as a victimization tool, management of client information, and workplace counseling as an excuse or escape route.

Very little information exists on counseling in Kenya for both the private and public sectors. Counseling governance has changed the way public sector operates .This is a result of integration which enhances psychological well-being, interrelation, co- ordination of demand in order to satisfy staff needs. McAdam *et al* (2010) stressed that interrelationships between the employees in the organization needs to be managed to enhance performance, enhances continuity and shared sense of value within the whole organizations.

A study carried out in the University of Nairobi on Implementation of Workplace counseling the results show that there are misconceptions about workplace counseling which was attributed to lack of knowledge and awareness of what workplace counseling entails. This concluded that the coping strategies adopted by staff were not adequate to deal with the work related issues, these strategies included strikes, confiding in colleague, turning to alcohol to escape the reality and praying to cope with the challenges. There is need for a workplace counseling service for staff to effectively deal with workplace stressors at the University of Nairobi.

# **Statement of the Problem**

The present business environment and operations are getting more challenging and therefore they have to improve their business operations to stay competitive and relevant, looking at the Institution as it is, there are quite a number of observable problems that one may want to look at and get a feeling that help both employees and the employer in terms of counseling may be of great necessity. Some of the areas that affect employees include; high levels of lateness in

reporting to work and or duty station is an area of great concern, perceived lack of control over work tasks, poor work environment, difficulties in relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

A report by Auditor general, 2013/2014 showed irregularities and dishonesty in remitting taxes and other statutory deductions like provident fund amounting to 2.8 billion shillings which caters for the well-being of employees and pay penalties due. This indicating that employees' health is not taken with much concern and also 20-30% showed employees are affected and more so stressed by this concern which is important for employees to feel they are being fairly compensated for their contribution in an organization, and the management is equally committed to provision of advancement opportunities as well as employee welfare.

A study that has been carried out in the Nairobi County Government on the other hand has tackled issues other than workplace counseling. For instance, Nzuve (2012) did a study on relationship between empowerment and performance in the City County government recommending improvement on aspects like working environment, provision of adequate resources, and process of handling employees' discontent. Another study by Ndiang'ui (2015) did a study on factors affecting completion of Road Construction projects in Nairobi City County where was establish the effect of manager's competencies for effective project managers. Despite previous study focusing on the County Government of Nairobi none has focused on the determinants on effective implementation of workplace counseling services, with an aim of filing in the knowledge gap and coming up with recommendations aimed at improving workplace counseling services to both employee and the employer in Nairobi City County.

# **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to assess the determinants of the implementation of workplace counseling in Nairobi City County Government.

The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To establish the role of employee wellbeing on implementation of workplace counseling at the Nairobi City County Government.
- ii. To assess how employee Relationship influence implementation of workplace counseling among staff at the Nairobi City County Government.
- iii. To find out how organizational culture influence implementation of workplace counseling at the Nairobi City County Government.
- iv. To assess how working conditions influences implementation of workplace counseling at the Nairobi City County Government.

# **Theoretical Review**

According to Kassim (2010) a theory is the assumption that contains several ideas to explain an event or a phenomenon and the function of that theory is to explain an event, control of certain

conditions and forecast. The research will focus on theories which explain the various factors which influence implementation of workplace counseling services in Nairobi City County Government. The study will focus on three key theories; the Reality therapy theory, Social efficacy theory, Schein's (1992) theory of organizational culture and Theory of Vocational Choice which explains many of the reasons behind need for counseling at work place.

# **Reality Therapy**

Reality therapy is a relatively new form of therapy in counseling. Reality therapy was founded by William Glasser a psychologist in California in 1965. Reality therapy refers to the client's phenomenal world and emphasizes the subjective way the client will see and interact with their surrounding world through internal control assessment. Glasser (1998) emphasizes that people see the world through the five basic needs of genetics (survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun) and not the real world as it is the locus of evaluation. Reality therapy argues that people have freedom, can make responsible choices and options. Reality Therapy focuses on the present and helps people to understand that they can choose a better present and future. This is based on Choice Theory that states, regardless of what has been occurred in the past, to be happy and effective we must live and plan in the present. Because of this, it is an effective short term therapy. To practice reality therapy, we create warm, trusting relationships with people. From these relationships, we are usually able to help them evaluate both what they want and the behaviors that they are presently choosing to satisfy their needs. Top management focuses on the principles of effective change either at the organizational level or with the individual employee.

# **Social Efficacy Theory**

Self-efficacy theory suggests that increasing the self-efficacy of employees will boost motivation and performance. The basic idea behind this theory is that motivation and performance are determined by how successful people believe they can be (Bandura, 2008). This is extremely useful in the workplace because employers can develop and improve self-efficacy beliefs in their employees by focusing on the four primary sources of performance outcomes, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Utilizing the sources of self-efficacy can improve employee's effort, persistence, goal setting, and performance on specific tasks. Applying vicarious experiences can be as simple as a waitress shadowing another experienced server or an apprentice learning his trade. Verbal persuasion can be used by showing praise for a job well done or by giving positive feedback on a specific task. Workplace counselors can provide insightful strategies to deal with stressors in the work environment.

# Schein's Model of Organizational Culture

Schein's (1992) model of organizational culture is not only one of the most cited culture models but also one that serves a high degree of abstraction and complexity reduction. It mainly consists

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of three domains: basic underlying assumptions, espoused values, and artifacts. He distinguishes between observable and unobservable elements of culture. Visible behavior influences and is influenced by unobservable assumptions through rules, standards, and prohibitions. According to Schein (1992), culture is the most difficult organizational attribute to change, outlasting organizational products, services, founders and leadership and all other physical attributes of the organization.

At the first level of Schein's model is organizational attributes that can be seen, felt and heard by the uninitiated observer - collectively known as artifacts. Included are the facilities, offices, furnishings, visible awards and recognition, the way that its members dress, how each person visibly interacts with each other and with organizational outsiders, and even company slogans, mission statements and other operational creeds. Artifacts comprise the physical components of the organization that relay cultural meaning. This theory shows that the study needs to understand the organization culture at the deepest level, although it may be insufficient to institute cultural change because the dynamics of interpersonal relationships often under threatening conditions are added to the dynamics of organizational culture which influences workplace counseling.

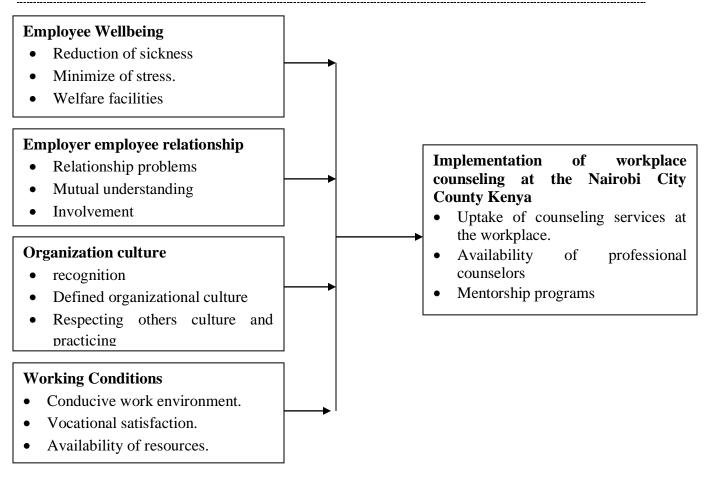
#### **Theory of Vocational Choice**

This study was guided by Chapman's work as cited by Ruhland (2001) which expands on Holland's theory of vocational choice. The theory posits that vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruence between one's personality and work environment. John Holland's Theory of Career Choice maintains that in choosing a career, people prefer jobs where they can be around others who are like them. They search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values, while taking on enjoyable problems and roles. Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment. This theory was crucial in guiding this study by unearthing the possible causes of stress in organizations as they interact with different environments that enable them to use their skills and abilities while taking enjoyable problems and roles.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation which is used to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables of the study include the Employee Wellbeing, Employer Employee Relationship, Organization Culture, Working Conditions dependent variable which includes the uptake of these services among staff in terms of the frequency of consultations, forms of workplace counseling implementation in the Nairobi City County Government.

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#### **Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variables** 

# **Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

#### Research gaps of the literature.

The following research gaps were identified while carrying out the empirical studies there lacks studies that cover the variables that the researcher looks at in this particular study. The study will assess the various variables so as to get a glimpse of how they affect counselling in the workplace being studied. This will aid in getting results and as a result closing the gap. In addition, the gap in literature is even more significant as more literature was so from the Western developed countries to a limited extent touching on West Africa countries and South Africa. Therefore organization management should note that without workplace counselling in place it becomes a failure for the organization to achieve its objective (Armstrong, 2012). No study that have been conducted in the said institution on the topic that the researcher is looking at; hence it will help in bridging this gap.

#### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive research design in order to provide a framework to examine the characteristics of the independent variables (employee well-being, employer-employees relationship, organizational culture and working conditions). The unit of analysis, which is the study population according to Nairobi City County Government (2017), consisted of 12,000 employees of Nairobi City County Government. The unit of observation which was the target was employees who are above middle level management level in all the 9 departments within Nairobi City County Government.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2013), a sample size of between 10and 30% is a good representation of the target population and hence 30% is adequate for analysis. The total number of sample size in this case was 130; arrived at using a 30% ratio of the target population. The stratified random sampling technique was employed. This is because the respondents were stratified into three categories i.e. directors, assistant directors and middle level managers. **Table 1: Sample Size** 

Department Heads	<b>Target Population</b>	Ratio	Sample size
Directors	65	(0.3*65)	20
Assistant Directors	125	(0.3*125	38
Middle level Manager	240	(0.3*240	72
Total	430		130

The study used self-administered questionnaires composed of close-ended questionnaires for easier analysis and also for convenience of both study and respondents of the study. A questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The questionnaires had closed ended questions that solicited respondent's views on the implications of counseling in the organization. Pre-testing of the instruments was undertaken prior to the main study on a group of respondents in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost and the statistical variability to predict the right sample size and also to improve the research design before the actual study.

Descriptive analysis was used. The data was coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data using SPSS (V22). This included percentages, means and frequencies. Tables, charts and other graphical presentations were used appropriately to present the data that was collected for ease of understanding and analysis. The study conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the extent to the on determinants of implementation of counseling services in the Nairobi City County Government. Regression analysis was used to predict the value of the dependent's variable on the basis of the independent variables.

#### **Research Findings and Discussion**

Descriptive and inferential statistics have been used to discuss the findings of the study. The study targeted 130 respondents, 120 of the respondents filled and returned the questionnaire, forming a response rate of 92%. A response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2010). Hence in our case the response rate is excellent. Reliability analysis was done to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The study used the Cronbach's Alpha. Gliem and Gliem (2013) established the Alpha value threshold at 0.7, thus forming a benchmark for the study. The Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of each objective. The findings as shown in Table 4.2 indicate that employee wellbeing as an alpha of 0.833, employer-employee relationship as an alpha of 0.741, organizational culture as an alpha of 0.814 and working conditions an alpha of 0.790. This shows that that all the variables are reliable.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Employee wellbeing	0.833	4
Employer-Employee relationship	0.741	4
Organizational culture	0.814	4
Working conditions	0.790	4

# Table 2: Reliability Analysis

# **Correlation Analysis**

The results revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between employee wellbeing and implementation of counseling services as shown by r = 0.643, statistically significant p = 0.002 < 0.01; there was a positive correlation between employer-employee relationship and implementation of counseling services as shown by r = 0.662, statistically significant P = 0.002; there was a positive correlation between organization culture and implementation of counseling services as shown by r = 0.589, statistically significant P = 0.003; there was a positive correlation between working conditions and implementation of counseling services as shown by r = 0.765, statistically significant P = 0.001. This implies that employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture, working conditions with implementation of counseling services is related. According to Newstrom and Dewis (2012) an employee may require workplace counseling services to deal with the problems they face in the organization. One of the significant roles of personnel management in the organization is to provide workplace counseling services to create employee job satisfaction and enhance employee performance in the organization. Management of effective counseling can help employees avoid the fall in personal problems, family, colleagues and interpersonal relationships. Counseling services which are

developed within the organization can also help the public and other organizations in improving their personal development to achieve productivity and quality of productive work. **Table 3: Correlation Coefficient** 

Conditions

1

120

Working

#### Implementation Organizational Relationship Wellbeing Employer-Employee Employee Implementation Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) Ν 120 .643\*\* 1 **Employee Wellbeing** Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) .002 Ν 120 120 **Employer-Employee** Pearson Correlation .662\*\* 1 .376 Relationship .002 .065 Sig. (2-tailed) Ν 120 120 120 .589\*\* **Organizational Culture** Pearson Correlation 1 .513 .535 Sig. (2-tailed) .003 .060 .079 Ν 120 120 120 120 .765\*\* **Working Conditions** Pearson Correlation .424 .278 .288 Sig. (2-tailed) .001 .081 .058 .182

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

# **Regression Analysis**

# **Model Summary**

Model summary is used to analyze the variation of dependent variable due to the changes of independent variables. The study analyzed the variations of implementation of counseling services due to the changes of employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions. Adjusted R squared was 0.669 implying that there was 66.5% variation of implementation of counseling services, due to the changes of employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions. The remaining 33.5% imply that there are other factors that lead to implementation of counseling services which were not discussed in the study. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables. From the findings, the study found out that there was a strong positive relationship between the study variables as shown by 0.841.

120

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# **Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate

	OCHIEN	G & KARANJ	A Int. j. soc. sci. i	nanag & entrep 1(1): 127- 140, April 2017
	0000	0.405	0.445	0.00024
1	.829 <sup>a</sup>	0.687	0.665	0.00034

#### **Analysis of Variance**

The analysis of variance ANOVA is used to determine whether the data used in the study is significant. From the ANOVA statistics, the processed data (population parameters) had a significance level of 0.001. This shows that the data is ideal for making conclusions on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. The F calculated was greater than F critical (50.283 > 2.451). This shows that employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions significantly influence implementation of counseling services.

 Table 5: Analysis of Variance

Mod	lel	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.798	4	4.700	50.283	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	10.748	115	0.093		
	Total	29.546	119			

# **Regression Coefficient**

The regression equation was

 $Y = 1.156 + 0.469 X_1 + 0.521 \ X_2 + 0.454 \ X_3 + 0.546 X_4$ 

The equation above reveals that holding employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions constant, the variables will significantly influence implementation of counseling services as shown by constant = 1.156 as shown in Table 6.

Employee wellbeing is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services as shown by ( $\beta = 0.469$ , P = 0.004). This shows that employee wellbeing had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in employee wellbeing will result to increase in implementation of counseling services.

Employer-employee relationship are statistically significant to implementation of counseling services as shown by ( $\beta = 0.521$ , P = 0.002). This indicates that employer-employee relationship had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in employer-employee relationship will result to increase in implementation of counseling services.

Organizational culture is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services as shown by ( $\beta = 0.454$ , P = 0.004). This shows that organizational culture had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in organizational culture will result to increase in implementation of counseling services.

Working conditions is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services as shown by ( $\beta = 0.546$ , P = 0.001). This implies that that working conditions had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This shows that a unit increase in working conditions will result to increase in implementation of counseling services.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize d Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.156	0.186		6.215	0.000
Employee wellbeing	0.469	0.095	0.369	4.937	0.004
Employer-Employee relationship	0.521	0.103	0.485	5.058	0.002
Organizational Culture	0.454	0.093	0.396	4.882	0.004
Working Conditions	0.546	0.098	0.429	5.571	0.001

# Table 6: Coefficients

# Conclusions

Employee well-being influences the implementation of counseling services. Employee wellbeing is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services. This shows that employee wellbeing had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in employee wellbeing will result to increase in implementation of counseling services. The study concludes that employee wellbeing is positively related to implementation of counseling services. Employer-employee relationship affects the implementation of counseling services. Employer-employee relationship is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services. This indicates that employer-employee relationship had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This indicates that employer-employee relationship had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This indicates that employer-employee relationship had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in employer-employee relationship will result to increase in implementation of counseling services. The study concludes that employer-employee relationship is positively related to implementation of counseling services.

Organizational culture influences the implementation of counseling services. Organizational culture is statistically significant to implementation of counseling services. This shows that organizational culture had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This implies that a unit increase in organizational culture will result to increase in implementation of counseling services. The study concludes that organizational culture is

positively related to implementation of counseling services. Working conditions influences the implementation of counseling services. Working conditions is statistically significant to implementation of counseling. This implies that that working conditions had significant positive relationship with implementation of counseling services. This shows that a unit increase in working conditions will result to increase in implementation of counseling services. The study concludes that working conditions are positively related to implementation of counseling services

#### Recommendations

The counsellor should give the employee recognition and not assume the role of a parent scolding a child. The counsellor should ensure that the counselling atmosphere is warm and conducive for communication. Encourage the employee to gain insight into the problem, in so doing avoiding cutting of employee's comments. Suggest positive steps that would lead to solving the problem or improve performance, avoiding giving the employee false hope. Create a desire for change in the employee by giving support that could lead to efficiency, not expecting a dramatic change in the employee's performance because of a single counselling session.

So that the counselling session is effective the management should maintain a good relationship with the employees. Because employers and employees often work in close quarters, they necessarily develop relationships. Managing these relationships is vital to counselling sessions, as strong relationships can lead to greater employee happiness and even increased productivity.

A written action plan that enumerates what the employee, the supervisor, and possibly, the HR professional, will do to improve the situation should be agreed on. The counsellor should schedule a date and time for follow-up in order to determine how the employee is progressing. Encourage the employee by expressing confidence in his or her ability to improve.

The counsellor should show confidence in the employee's ability and willingness to solve the problem. Focus on the problem or behaviour that needs improvement, not the employee. Determine whether there are issues affecting the employee's ability to perform or accomplish the task, bearing in mind the four common barriers - time, training, tools, and temperament. Discuss possible solutions to the problem with the employee by asking the employee for ideas on how to correct or prevent the problem from future occurrence.

# **Recommendations for Further Study**

The study assessed the determinants of the implementation of workplace counseling in Nairobi City County Government. The study found that there was 66.5% variation of implementation of counseling services, due to the changes of employee wellbeing, employer-employee relationship, organizational culture and working conditions. The study recommends that other studies should

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be conducted on the determinants of the implementation of workplace counseling in Nairobi City County Government to cover the remaining 33.5%.

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